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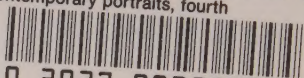
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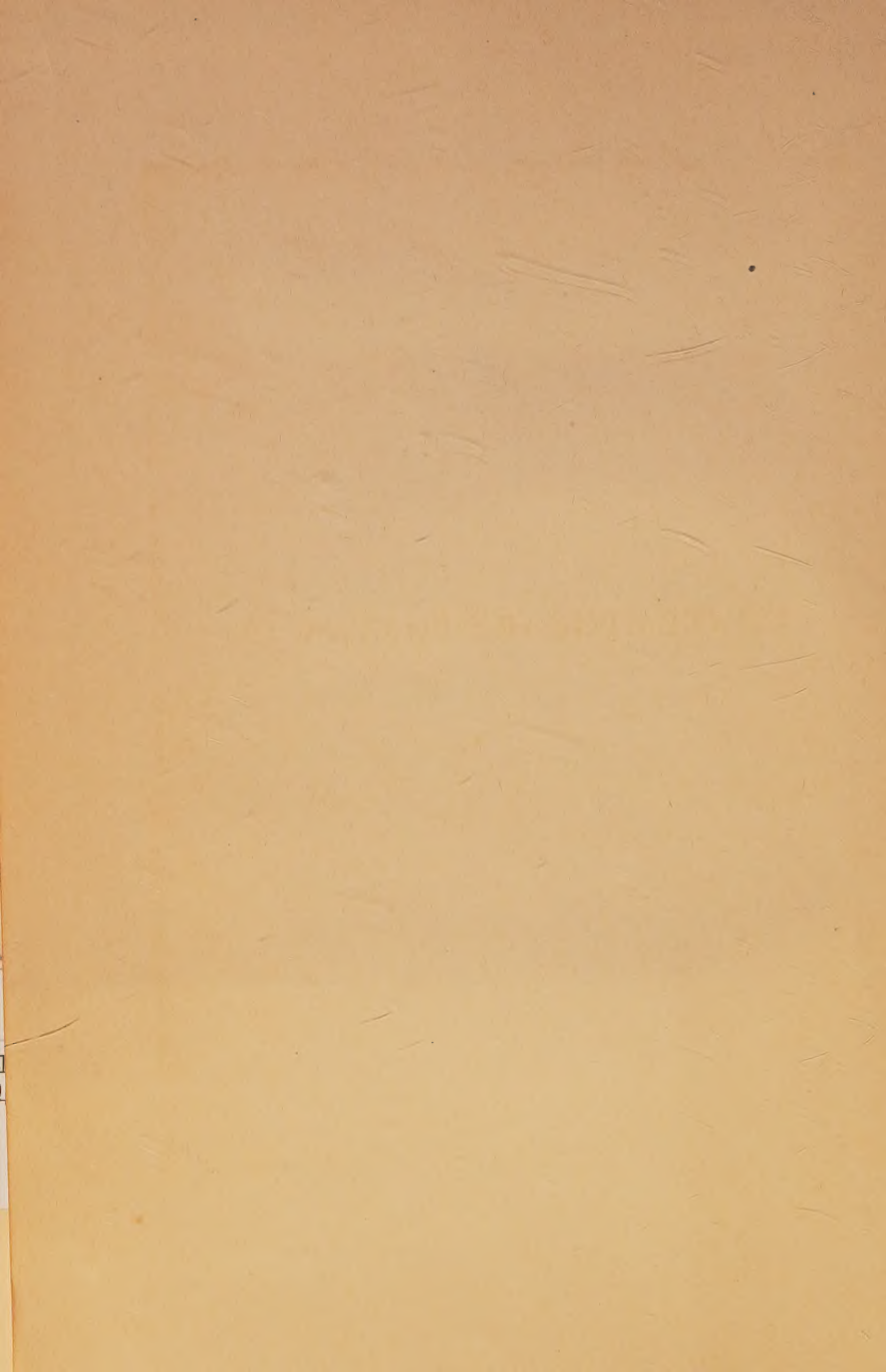
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## CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS



# CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS

FOURTH SERIES

BY  
FRANK HARRIS



NEW YORK  
BRENTANO'S  
Publishers



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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC.  
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

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## THE DRAMA OF LIFE

*The stage is magnificent beyond imagining, the throne-room of a God, lit by suns and stars; dawning wonder and noonday glow, sunset and shadowy night, and all the while men come and go in crowds, playing the old parts.*

*Tragedy, comedy, and farce; murder, incest, and love; ambition, greed, and self-renunciation; noble virtues jostling paltry conceits; poisonous cruelties cheek by jowl with sweet humanities; gentle women devoting themselves to brutes; men dying for an idea. And what it's all about, no one knows.*

*Is there any meaning in the drama? None can say; no purpose can be divined.*

*Is there any author or director? If so, he keeps out of sight and hearing, and cannot be traced in the infinite complexity of the work.*

*We know nothing of the beginning or of the end; while still talking, we are dragged off the stage and tossed as refuse on the dust-heap.*

*The good we have done is as a drop of water in the sea, and the evil seldom outlives us; the whole to-do is as the buzzing of flies under a glass bell, or the clamour of wild-fowl speeding as if tethered to the harvest moon!*





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## INTRODUCTION

I might say with Browning "Here they are my fifty men and women finished." It is evident now to everyone that his "Andrea del Sarto," his "Fra Lippo Lippi" and even his "Bishop Blougram" are great romantic pen-portraits worthy to rank with the best of Vandyke; the Englishman, showing a modern preference for the artist or philosopher type just as the earlier master preferred the courtier or aristocratic type. My pen-portraits are different being founded on a new conception of the art. I have always taken my subjects from people I have known intimately and liked if not loved, affection being the only key to the human heart.

Literary criticism in itself has a certain value and interest; it interests us all to know what an Anatole France thinks of the work of this dead master or of that contemporary; he is perhaps altering the position they appear to occupy in the firmament of letters; but there is little or no soul-revealing in the work; except that of the writer himself; he is not interested in the personal peculiarities and idiosyncracies of his subjects; it is their work he is concerned with, the fruit and flowers so to say; but not the tree.

I have always been interested in the tree, the man himself, have always sought to explain the varieties of the fruit by the nature of the tree, its position, its surroundings, the weather even that brought this fruit near perfection while spoiling that. The man himself has



always been of supreme concern to me and this study furnishes the very stuff of history.

An example will show my meaning better. Theophile Gautier had the luck to know Balzac almost from his beginnings in Paris to the untimely end; he was big enough to love and admire the greater man and was in consequence admitted to his intimacy. After Balzac's death, Gautier wrote of him in his "Portraits Contemporains," giving us incomparable pictures of Balzac's optimism and his magical talks, telling us how he chose works of art and fought with his creditors, leading us thus to the very heart of his mystery. He even assures us that he knew all Balzac's early affairs with women, the passing love-fancies of his youth, as well as his mature affections; he could thus explain, he assures us, Balzac's astonishing knowledge of women and his unique gallery of women-portraits; but when Gautier has in this way excited our curiosity to the utmost and we are all agog to know how far our guesses explain the facts, he slams the door in our face with the words "I don't think it proper to divulge such personal secrets." And so the mystery remains unsolved and the man Balzac in his habit as he lived and loved will never be known to us. Gautier's best knowledge he took with him to the grave.

But what dreadful brainless reticence! The souls of great men, I have often said, are the Jacob's Ladder leading from Earth to Heaven: it is by knowledge of them, of their heart, and essence, and in being that the younger ones must grow in their turn, mounting rung by rung. To leave such a gap is nothing less than a crime—for this is the very quiddity and quintessence of Balzac.

In his remarkable essay on Walter Scott, Balzac de-

plores the fact that the great romance-writer knew little or nothing of women and has left us no portraits of women comparable to those of his men. Balzac attributes this to the debilitating influence of English puritanism; had Scott been bred in our larger and more tolerant Catholic Christianity, he says, he would have studied women more deeply. Balzac was right in his fact, but mistaken in his inference. Goethe was bred in Protestantism, but Goethe studied women as deeply as Balzac himself; and moreover being a greater man than Scott, he was also franker, and the pictures of his women are finer even than those of his men.

I had published a volume of portraits before coming across Gautier's sketch of Balzac; in it, I saw reason to prefer my own, more outspoken method. But alas! it was very difficult for me to write frankly on sex-matters in England and altogether impossible in America. I could hint at the truth; sketch its outlines even to good readers; but to reveal it in all its details and consequences, was forbidden me. Accordingly I resolved sooner or later to write my *Life's Story* and there talk with entire frankness and supply the facts I had been compelled in many portraits merely to suggest, and so sketch the *Tree of Life* of my celebrated contemporaries and give to posterity the heart and mind and nerves of my generation.

What success I have had in this enterprise, it is for the coming generations to say. With a few exceptions but among them Bernard Shaw and Meredith, the men of my own time have made it as difficult for me to do my work as they could. Time and again I had fought for the underdog, for the Irish and Egyptians, Hindus and Boers when all men knew that my attitude was directly

opposed to my self-interest. As soon as I tried to state fairly the case of the Germans in the world-war, English writers such as Arnold Bennett sneered at my attitude and didn't hesitate to ascribe it to unworthy motives. Shaw was alone in defending me, a very Abdiel, "faithful he among the faithless, true he among innumerable false."

And even worse will be said of my frankness in regard to sex; but what after all does it matter? Every kite goes up against the wind; popular detraction should help one and not hinder. The hatred of the many creates the solitude in which the spirit can grow unchecked to full height. I am not inclined to complain and indeed only set forth the truth here to encourage the young ones who may, in their turn, be plagued by similar flesh-flies.

As for my motives they must appear in my work. I have loved nearly all the men about whom I have written and I am conscious of having been more than kind in my appreciations as we all should be.

One word about the ordinary American way of treating works of art or literature. I was astonished to find that the *London Times* gave two articles three columns in length to my third volume of "Portraits" though they professed to find in them "a regrettable anti-English bias," but in spite of that the *London Times* was minded to consider my "Portraits" from the point of view of literature—a memorable piece of magnanimity, it seemed to me, which stood in sharp contrast to the American practice. Neither the *New York Times* nor any of the American dailies even mentioned my book. This merely furnishes further proof of the well-known fact that all literary criticism in the United States, and in-



deed, all literary and artistic products are far beneath the ordinary European standard in honesty as in ability. Where else would the poetry of Amy Lowell or the criticism of a Brander Matthews win acceptance or even a hearing?

I think it is necessary to record my experience in this matter just as Walt Whitman when approaching his seventieth year thought it right to tell the world that he had sent three poems to the chief American magazines of his time; they were all rejected and returned, he says, and the editor of *The Century* barbed his refusal with gratuitous "insult."

In the last year I have sent one of my best stories and one of my best "Portraits" to a dozen American editors who had asked to see any work of mine: they were both rejected with foolish impertinent phrases such as "be-lated" as if I were a purveyor of news-items. The editor of one of the most widely circulated magazines in the States, wrote of the great human story of Renoir's heroic achievement as told by Matisse that it did not "suit the editorial policy of the magazine" which was no doubt true and explains if it cannot justify the dire indignities inflicted on millions of American readers by such editors.

How long is America going to accept its secondary position in literature, in art and in thought, in fine in all spiritual life? Has no one a new ideal for America, an ideal as much higher than that of any existing national life as the ideal of Jefferson and Hamilton was nobler than English life under George III? Just before the election of the late President Harding, he invited me to come out to Marion to have a talk and in the course of our conversation asked me to tell him just what I proposed.

"The primary object of all civilization," I said, "is the humanization of man yet the American government does nothing for this ideal. Look at what is done in France, for instance for music; the state has established Opera Houses in Paris and a great Conservatory of Music for teaching every branch of the art; many French towns too have followed the good example and so France is proud of its musicians and its national music. Why even Monte-Carlo boasts of its Opera House duly and heavily subventioned. The French State too supports two theatres in Paris and a school of dramatic art. And thus provincial towns are encouraged to follow suit; but what does the American State do for Music or the Drama?"

"In Germany the State endows chemical laboratories, and subventions scientific research, why should we not follow this good example as well?"

"But where would the money for all this come from?" asked Mr. Harding.

"America is many times richer than France," I rejoined. "But if you will let me, I'll point out where the money could come from with advantage to every American Citizen.

"America is the strongest country in the world, stronger I think than all other countries put together, nor has it any war-like or ambitious neighbours; besides it is impossible of attack; why not use its power and position to set a great example; disband our Army and Navy and use this enormous subvention to establish schools of Music and Drama; we could then have National Opera Houses and Theatres and Municipal Opera Houses too and Theatres; why, we might have a great School of American Music in twenty years and an

American Drama to boot ay, and probably a Shakespeare or two to enrich our souls."

"I never heard so insane a proposal in my life," cried Warren Harding. "Fancy disbanding the American Army and Navy; I want to increase the power of America, not throw it away!"

"You would increase its moral power and position in this way infinitely," I replied; "your Army and Navy add nothing to the power of America; they are nothing but sets of false teeth which are almost worthless even to bite with."

"Fancy America without an Army or Navy and with a Secretary not for War but for Peace—why you might even found a National Newspaper for telling the truth and subvention municipal newspapers and found schools of journalism and so destroy the influence of the vile 'Kept' press!"

"Our press," said Mr. Harding, "is notoriously the best and most honest in the world!"

"Notoriously and plainly," I said, "the most dishonest and in tone the lowest in Christendom, scurvily servile and subservient all the time to money and moneyed-power as Upton Sinclair has proved conclusively in his 'Black Check.'"

"We shan't agree in anything," was Mr. Harding's forlorn conclusion.

Yet as Whitman too saw, the American working-man is the best in the world, a confirmed idealist with high practical sense; and so I put these ideas before him in all confidence, for America is too great now, and too powerful, and—why should one hesitate to say it—too noble to be kept in leading strings though the strings are

gilded and of English make. Something must soon be done to develop and enrich and intensify the spiritual life of the hundred million inhabitants of this great country or it will become known throughout the world as "The Benighted States."



# I

## THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

AND

THE HON. GEORGE WYNDHAM

**T**HE other day Wilfrid Blunt died when over eighty years old and left everything he possessed to his secretary. This excited a great deal of comment. Those who knew the man and the chief circumstances were not surprised, but most people, and particularly those who knew a little, were dumbfounded. Surely Blunt had a daughter? Why had he not left his property, and especially Crabbet Park, to her?

When I knew Blunt, in the eighties, his wife, Lady Anne, was a dried-up, crabbed little creature, with a strong chin and self-will enough to have cowed almost any husband. But Wilfrid seldom paid much attention to her, and when she nagged and complained he would go away to another part of the house. Judith, the daughter, was a very quiet girl at that time, but she must have inherited a good deal of her mother's pluck. For later, I am told, she divorced her husband, and engaged in a long litigation with her father as to the ownership of his Arab horses—his chief hobby—and so managed to turn his affection for her into a disaffection, which found its echo in the will.

Forty years ago, Blunt was a striking personality, and his setting in Crabbet Park was nearly perfect! He

was a little above middle height, with slight well-made figure and a remarkably handsome face. His beard and moustache were of a silky golden brown, the nose quite straight, and the eyes deep blue. As I began to know him, I associated his eyes with his charming urbane manner: they were kindly, caressing even, like his manner.

It was, I think, in 1885 that I made Blunt's personal acquaintance at the Epsom Races, where he was conspicuous through having driven to the course a team of four beautifully matched small Arab horses.

A little later, he was quoted in some daily paper as saying that Arab horses were the fastest and best in the world. As I had tried them in Cairo, I could only write saying that I thought Blunt was mistaken, the English thoroughbred racehorse being a far finer animal. Thereupon Blunt invited me down to Crabbet Park to see his stud and really study the question, and thus correct and enlarge my views.

After visiting the stables, we had an excellent dinner. To my astonishment, Blunt came to the table dressed as an Arab chief in clothes given to him by the Prince of Nejd, and the flowing robes suited him admirably.

I noticed at dinner that he drank nothing, though he had a very good cellar, and gave me a Perrier Jouet of 1874 that I still remember. When I asked him how he came to drink water, he told me, to my astonishment, that he regarded himself as a Moslem, and preferred the ideas of the Orient to those of our Western civilisation.

There was a certain amount of pose in all this, but it was carried off by his kindly ways and superbly handsome appearance.

Lady Anne retired soon after dinner, excusing herself on account of a migraine, and left me to enjoy Blunt's talk and a Madeira that would have cured, I thought, any ailment in the world.

I had already realised that Blunt could talk well about subjects that interested him. About his Arab horses, for instance, he talked excellently, and even better about the necessity of the enfranchisement of all subject peoples, especially of the Irish, the Egyptians, and the Hindus. The English despotism in Ireland was again and again the target of his wit. He interested me, and I had grown to like him, though he still spoke to me with a certain condescension, which made me smile; for it could hardly be explained by the difference of age.

When he became rhetorical in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and declared that that was his chief reason for supporting Lord Randolph Churchill, I determined to see if he was open to new ideas. Accordingly, I propounded the theory that large empires of necessity produce small men. "If our earth, for instance," I began, "were ten times its present size, we should all be pigmies, for the force of gravitation would be so great that the average man would not be able to walk, or even move. He would be literally glued to the ground by the force of attraction, whereas if our earth were only one-quarter its present size, we might all be giants! Small countries," I concluded, "like Ireland, have produced more great men in the last thirty years than the United States."

Blunt was delighted with my whimsical theory, took it to his heart at once, and swore that it was the most illuminating statement he had ever heard. From that moment on, we were friends.

The slight condescension of manner disappeared, and Blunt began talking at once of literature and literary men, tentatively at first, evidently fearing lest he might get beyond the sympathy of his American visitor, but bit by bit letting himself go, surprised to find that his *vis-à-vis* knew something of English letters, and more still of German and French writers and the classics.

In half an hour Blunt was talking freely, and I listened enthralled. For he knew everybody in England that counted, and, so far as my knowledge of literature went, his judgment seemed admirably correct. He was far kinder to Tennyson, for example, than I could have been. Tennyson's "May Queen" and even "Maud" seemed to me the veriest tosh; but Blunt insisted that Tennyson at his best was a great poet, with a supreme lyric gift. He got up in his excitement, I remember, and spouted:—

"Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades,  
For ever and for ever when I move."

"No Christian tosh, that," he cried, "but high poetry."

"You are right," I admitted. "Though I dislike Tennyson's brainlessness, I have always confessed in my heart that he had a great gift of slow music."

"Slow music?" queried Blunt.

"Surely," I replied; "just as Shakespeare's verse is the swiftest of all, Tennyson's is the slowest. Contrast Hamlet's soliloquy that begins so gravely:

'To be or not to be, that is the question,'

and then after the first line the headlong speed of the next, like the rush of water in the rapids, and compare this with Tennyson's astounding slow movement in:

Break, break, break,  
On Thy cold grey stones, oh Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

"Slow music indeed!" cried Blunt; "but how on earth did you ever come to be editor of the *Evening News*? I thought it was a sporting, racing sheet, and wondered what on earth I should talk to you about after dinner, and now you surprise me with new words and true words, too, about our poets. I am simply startled out of all politeness. You ought to be the editor of the *Athenæum*, only I am afraid that that position demands a certain dullness."

"I am quite happy on the *Evening News*," I retorted. "Sportsmen who bet are the quickest people in England to recognise any new thing, and so the circulation of the *Evening News* has gone up greatly. I am allowed to write, not only on Arab horses, but sometimes even on poetry."

"I am the gainer," he said, smiling charmingly. "I wonder whether you have seen any of my verses?" he added diffidently.

"I know some of your sonnets," I said, "and like them, but I do not know them as well as I ought to."

"If you will let me give you a copy, I shall be delighted, but you must tell me the truth about them," he added, as he brought his book to me; "the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"In that case, I shall be up all night," I cried, "and



I must catch the early train to London in the morning. Starting prices wait for no man."

"When will you come down again?" he asked. "Any week-end we shall be glad to have you."

"Whenever you wish," I replied. "I shall have read your two volumes over and over again before next Saturday, so you can choose your own time. Only I must warn you I am not a poet, and so you will remember I am reading with head and heart, and not with ears for new cadences or the 'dying fall' of verbal music."

"I am already frightened enough," he replied, "but next Saturday I will be at the station to meet you. It is rare indeed to get such a talk as this."

Though we got up and stood together, we did not separate then, or indeed for a couple of hours afterwards. Blunt was so amazed at something I said in praise of James Thomson, whom he did not know at all, that he simply compelled me to recite pages of "The City of Dreadful Night" before he would let me go.

"How could so great a poet exist in England," he cried, "without everyone knowing him?"

"English snobbery," I replied; "but Meredith knew him, and the Brownings, and many others."

"And never helped him!" he exclaimed. "How could they let a great poet die in poverty? Another crime, worse than Chatterton's, to lay to England's charge. What a cursed thing is our modern democracy! It is engrossed with teaching brainless little brats to read and write, who can never profit by their knowledge, while it leaves one of the greatest and noblest of poets to die in misery. Do you wonder that I prefer the East, where great men are all honoured and beloved, and where the wastrels are disregarded? After all, it is surely better to

take care of the heads and hearts, than of the hands and feet."

The next day he drove me to the station, and I went back to my work in London, delighted to have made the acquaintance of such an interesting personality. I began to talk about him in Fleet Street and wherever journalists congregated; but, to my astonishment, found that he was little esteemed. He had stood for Parliament, I was told, as a Conservative Home Ruler but he was a wretched platform speaker, it appeared, who stuttered and stammered over the simplest phrases, and, when he did become fluent, it was to expatiate upon some mad idea that no one could understand. One man summed up the argument by declaring that Blunt had said, upon the platform, that all through the East they were concerned with the souls of men, while our Western civilisation was concerned merely with the body. I thought there was something to be said for the phrase, but the journalists would not have it.

On Friday I received a letter from Blunt, reminding me of my promise to visit him, and telling me that George Wyndham, a Member of Parliament, would also be at Crabbet that week-end.

I knew George Wyndham fairly well already, and liked what I had seen of him exceedingly. He had come to me once about something in Shakespeare's sonnets, and was evidently a little surprised at my knowledge of them, just as I was surprised by the fact that so handsome a man, and one with fifty interests, should have found time to spend years on the study of Shakespeare's verse. I think it was Wyndham who first gave me the key to a fairly complete understanding of the English gentleman.

The Admirable Crichton is a part of the consciousness

of the best Englishmen; "a good all-round man," as Harry Cust used to express it, is their ideal. The Englishman wishes to be good at sports and at athletics, a fair scholar too, and courteous as Lancelot; he should also be interested in ideas and, of course, in ideals. I had already begun to think that Wyndham was the best specimen of the Admirable Crichton I had ever seen; he was about five feet ten or eleven in height, with an excellent figure and handsome, intellectual face; a touch of grey in his hair set off his finely chiselled features and aristocratic head. I wish I could get a word for his voice; it was a rich tenor, and he used it admirably in conversation as in public speaking. In my mind I began to compare him with Blunt; but Blunt's Eastern proclivities made him particularly interesting, and years passed before I realised that Wyndham was as high-minded and idealistic as Blunt at his best, and more reasonable—a stronger character in fact.

I may as well tell the story here. From 1890 on I came to know Wyndham intimately; he lived next door to me in Park Lane, in Lady Grosvenor's house, and often came in to lunch or for a talk. For some time he was Balfour's secretary, and, when Balfour became Premier, Wyndham became Secretary for Ireland. One evening he told me that Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the Irish agitator, had been one of his forebears, and the one he most admired, and I cried at once, "Why don't you settle the Irish question once for all? It is purely economic."

Wyndham remarked quietly, "I'd give heart's blood to settle it."

"Go to it!" I exclaimed; "there are two ways: the great one would be to nationalise the land; but England isn't ready for that; the next best thing is to advance

money so that the Irish tenant could buy the land and thus become a peasant proprietor."

"I'll study the question," said Wyndham; and his Irish Land Act was the outcome.

Without Wyndham's Act, Ireland would not have got Home Rule so easily; but it hurt him in the House, and most of all with the rank and file of his party, as he knew it would. I have always thought of him since as perhaps the best specimen of an English gentleman, the nearest approach to ideal manhood, it has ever been my good fortune to meet, except one American. The English gentleman is probably the highest national ideal to be found in this world; unfortunately he is not intellectual enough to satisfy other peoples: at his best even he is apt, as we shall see in the case of Blunt, to cherish judgments that are ludicrously wrong and prejudices that alienate; but how honourable he is, and kindly and loyal—the salt of the earth!

I had the good luck to go down with Wyndham in the same train to Horsham, and he told me a great deal about Blunt that I did not know. Blunt, it seemed, had travelled all through Arabia years before with his wife: Lady Anne had written the story in "A Pilgrimage to Nejd," in two volumes, giving the history of their wanderings, and Blunt had then learned to understand and appreciate this great Semitic people.

After the Egyptian rising in the early eighties was crushed by the British, Blunt spent some five thousand pounds of his own money in defending Arabi Pasha, the Nationalist leader, and he it was who selected A. M. Broadley as Arabi's counsel.

Broadley, whom I knew pretty well even then, had had a variegated career. He had been in India as a Civil

Servant, and had had to leave because of a shameful accusation. He retired to Tunis and, a little later, began sending correspondence to the *Times*. Within a year he was made *Times* correspondent in Tunis. This quickly rehabilitated him and he was allowed to return to England, and soon got in with Edmund Yates and did excellent articles for the *World*, one of the best of the weekly papers. Broadley became a sort of power in London, and continued to hold a certain position until he ran foul accidentally of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward, and was forced to go to Brussels until the storm blew over. But, in his early days in London, he was briefed by Blunt, as I have said, to defend Arabi Pasha, and did his work most admirably, with the result that Arabi passed some years of exile, I believe in Ceylon, and was then permitted to return to Egypt. The hero of Egyptian nationalism owed his life, and ultimately, I believe, his liberty, to Blunt's generous sympathy and assistance.

Wyndham told me many things about the Blunts that I had not known. To my surprise, I learned that Lady Anne was the grand-daughter of Lord Byron, the poet, and a woman of exceptional cultivation. She spent most of her time, he said, in a remote wing at Crabbet Park, where she read and played the violin to her daughter Judith. Lady Anne afterwards became Countess of Lovelace in her own right.

Visiting Crabbet Park with Wyndham was a new experience to me. The park was pretty, but the house was not wonderful, except that it had a minstrel gallery which gave it a certain old-world atmosphere.

Wyndham told me, with a spice of malice, that Blunt



put on the flowing robes of an Arab sheik and behaved as a good Moslem at dinner in order to annoy his wife, who was a fervent Catholic. Indeed, Blunt exulted in contradictions: a strict teetotaller, he insisted on teaching me that Madeira was one of the very greatest of wines, and in truth his Madeira was more a benediction than a beverage.

He had a real gift for poetry. It pleased him enormously that I knew half a dozen of his sonnets to Proteus by heart, and recited some of them as we drove to the house. At the same time, he was proud of using a rhyming dictionary constantly, declaring that all good poets needed mechanical assistance.

In the talk with Wyndham, his age gave him a certain superiority. "To get on in the world," he said, "you should join a party and support it, as Wyndham here does; but if your thoughts and beliefs are your own, you must necessarily be a failure, as I am." This seemed a commonplace to me, but Wyndham would not have it at any price, asserting that Arthur Balfour had more ideas on politics than any man in England, and yet was a leader of the Conservative Party; but Blunt would not accept this estimate. Arthur Balfour, in his opinion, was narrow and hide-bound. A true Scot, he said, interested in metaphysics and all that sort of hair-splitting, and nothing else. In spite of their differences in opinion, I noticed a sort of camaraderie between these two men, which is very characteristic of the best class of Englishmen, and not to be met with elsewhere.

Blunt and Wyndham, too, seemed to know everyone of any position in Society or in Politics. Like Wyndham, Blunt claimed relationship with half the peerage.

## THE CRABBET CLUB

It was on this visit, I think, that I first heard of the Crabbet Club, a sort of poetry club which seemed to have adopted some of the tenets of the French Academy. It was Blunt's special creation; the motto too was his: "Youth and crabbed Age," but youth was the note and the "crabbed" only a poor pun on the name of the house. Ladies were severely excluded, though I found out later that Lady Anne knew most of what went on. Whoever married or took office or did anything serious lost caste, it appeared, and had to submit to examination and re-election. There were mock trials and fantastic penalties, and everyone was supposed to be able to write a poem at any time and on any subject. The poetry and songs would not have passed any censor, but the meetings, perhaps partly for that reason, were always most enjoyable.

Some years later, Oscar Wilde was invited one night to the Crabbet Park Club. He had to be introduced by his predecessor, who happened to be George Curzon, now Lord Curzon, who was supposed to deliver an eulogy of the newcomer, but, to the astonishment of everyone, George Curzon was in his most philistine mood and hinted from the beginning that Oscar Wilde would never have been heard of, had it not been for the seduction of strange sins that clung about his name.

Again and again he came back to this, until everybody began to feel uncomfortable, and those of us who knew how weak an opposite Oscar was, were filled with fear lest he should break down and find himself unable to answer Curzon's ill-natured taunts; but when Oscar got up he was applauded enthusiastically, and in five minutes made a wonderful impression. I have told what fol-

lowed, in Oscar's own words, in my "Life" of him. He began by declaring that everyone had always been interested in George Curzon. "One of the great names in England, one of the young men picked and chosen 'to stand on the forehead of the time to come' and point the way. We all heard of him at Eton," he said, "as a boy who worked incessantly and who, besides, made himself, even as a school-boy, a first-rate political speaker.

"It was naturally very difficult," he went on, "for Curzon to work and study at Oxford. Everyone wanted to know him because of his position, because he was going into Parliament, and certain to make a great figure there; and everyone tried to make up to him, but he knew that he must not yield to such seductions, so he sat in his room with a wet towel about his head, and worked and worked and worked without ceasing.

"In the earlier examinations, which demand only memory, he won first honours. But even success could not induce him to relax his efforts; he lived laborious days and took every college examination seriously; he made out dates in red ink and hung them on his wall, and learnt pages of uninteresting events and put them in blue ink in his memory, and at last came out of the 'Final Schools' with second honours. And now," Oscar concluded, "this model youth is going into life, and he is certain to treat it seriously, certain to win at any rate second honours in it, and have a great and praiseworthy career."

"They all roared with laughter," Oscar said, "and, to do Curzon justice, at the end he came up to me and apologised, and was charming. Indeed, they all made much of me, and we had a great night.

"I remember we talked the whole night through, or rather I talked and everyone else listened, for the great

principle of the division of labour is beginning to be understood in English society. The host gives excellent food, excellent wine, excellent cigarettes, and super-excellent coffee—that's his part; and all the men listen—that's theirs; while I talk and the stars twinkle their delight.

"Wyndham was there too; you know George Wyndham, with his beautiful face and fine figure; he is infinitely cleverer than Curzon, but he has not Curzon's push and force, or perhaps, as you say, he is not in such close touch with the average man as Curzon; he was charming to me.

"In the morning we all trooped out to see the dawn, and some of the young ones, wild with youth and high spirits—Curzon, of course, among the number—stripped off their clothes and rushed down to the lake and began swimming and diving about like a lot of schoolboys. There is a great deal of the schoolboy in all Englishmen; that is what makes them so lovable. When they came out they ran all over the grass to dry themselves, and then began playing lawn tennis, just as they were—stark naked—the future rulers of England. I shall never forget the scene. Wilfrid Blunt had gone up to his wife's apartments and had changed into some fantastic pyjamas; suddenly he opened an upper window and came out and perched himself, cross-legged, on the balcony, looking down at the mad game of lawn tennis, for all the world like a sort of pink and green Buddha, while I strolled about with someone, and ordered fresh coffee, and talked till the dawn came with silent silver feet lighting up the beautiful greenery of the park."

Blunt could not hope to be always fortunate in Great Britain. He professed to follow Lord Randolph Churchill, who was supposed to be coquetting with Home Rule

for Ireland. Everyone believed, or pretended to believe, that Randolph had a plan for dishing Gladstone over Ireland, much as Peel dished the Whigs over Free Trade. But Randolph said that there was no truth in the rumour. Later, Randolph showed generalship and profound Toryism by stirring up Ulster for the first time to self-consciousness—"Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right"—and so made Home Rule impossible for a generation; but Blunt went about talking in Ireland, and at length spoke at a meeting in Woodford in a proclaimed district, and the resident magistrate sentenced him to two months' imprisonment. He would have been let off, because of his position and connections, if he had only promised not to begin again, but he would take no pledge. He appealed, and the appeal was heard in the Four Courts of Dublin. He insisted on appearing in his prison clothes, but the Castle people got some of their own tradesmen on the jury, and Blunt had to do time.

He afterwards stood for Deptford as a Liberal, and, thanks to the efforts of Sir Charles Russell—afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen—he very nearly won.

I had not seen him for some ten years when the first volume of his diary came out, shortly after the close of the war. It was followed by a second volume, and I think that, as a book, it may live with the Greville Memoirs, although it does not give the best of Blunt.

It shows, of course, that Blunt was much more than an admirer and breeder of Arab horses; that he was, as Renan used to say, "a friend of man" and a lover of liberty, above all a lover of the right, who condemned his own countrymen more severely than any other people when they transgressed. At his best, a true poet and a priest of the ideal. I have known no more courteous



gentleman, and few more interesting companions, than Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

He was not a great man, and his English love of liberty blinded him to the need of a certain measure of Socialism: even Blunt should have seen that the land and all its riches should belong to the whole people; he was an English gentleman of great courage and generosity; but the gaps in his intelligence were often ludicrous.

In 1910 he visited the Grafton gallery to study the Post-Impressionist pictures sent over from Paris. He knew beforehand that Roger Fry, who had got up the exhibition, was "a critic of taste"; he knew, too, that Desmond MacCarthy, who acted as secretary, was a good judge of art; nevertheless his offhand decision is that "the exhibition is either an extremely bad joke or a swindle. I am inclined to think the latter," he adds, "for there is no trace of humour in it: apart from the frames, the whole collection should not be worth five pounds—a pornographic show!" No draughtsmanship in Matisse or Gauguin; nothing in Cezanne's landscapes, so the English wrote of the Primitives, and even of Botticelli, for hundreds of years taking an unholy pride in their own purblindness.

Of course, too, Blunt hated the Germans, knew nothing of Goethe or Heine; condemned the Italians *en masse* as "a cowardly people and very cruel"; and "the usual American tourists are," he asserts, "the most senseless type of human nature, being quite insensible to beauty or decorum, and with the manners of shop-boys, who ramble through the gardens of the ancient world with as little knowledge of their value as the beasts have, defiling all and trampling all."

After this, one can read with some equanimity his per-

sonal lament, poignant though it is: "A black melancholy is on me, caused by a sense of my failure everywhere in life. My poetry, my Eastern politics, my Arab horse-breeding were strings to my bow, and they have one after another snapped; and to-day, looking through my memoirs, I perceive how slackly they are written and how unworthy they are of survival. Yet the diaries are full of things too important for me to destroy, and they overwhelm me with despair."

Even the greatest, who hold strings that will not snap, yet know these black moments when they compare their achievement with what they might have been and might have done. Yet Blunt's was distinctly a liberating influence, and one was always conscious in him of high standards and ideal aims: a charming personality.

## II

### MEMORIES OF RICHARD WAGNER

**I**T was in 1878 or '79, I think, that I was studying in Munich, and one evening at the opera Heinrich Vogl, the great singer, told me that Wagner had come to town. People no longer treated him, as Berlioz said, as "a scamp and impostor or idiot," but I was often amazed to find that nine out of ten capable musicians were inclined to question his greatness and usually spoke disdainfully of "the Music of the Future" and Wagner's theatrical innovations!

The journalists I met took a still lower view, and talked of him with shrugs and jeers as the parasite and chamber-musician of the profligate young King, and did not scruple to hint at viler reasons for what they regarded as the peculiar alliance of age with youth.

The ordinary citizen, or so-called man in the street, was even more venomous. He would talk wildly of the sums lavished upon Wagner by the King, and declare that the monarch must be made to indulge in such extravagance: "It's our money, you know, and we shall have to pay for this new-fangled theatre. We Muenchener folk have no reason to like this renegade Socialist who now lives off the fat of the land and does nothing for it—mad King, bad favourite!"

In spite of the King's favour—or because of it—Wagner was more than once compelled to leave Munich. In 1865 he had answered continuous newspaper calumnies

in a quiet, dignified letter, but it availed him nothing. The police assured the King that Wagner's life was in danger, and the King himself asked him to leave Munich for a time, in order that the people might come to their senses. Another proof may be given of the low estimate of Wagner cherished in German musical centres, even in the latter years of his life.

The King wanted to build Wagner a theatre in Munich, but the Town Council would not hear of it. They vetoed the proposal, and in consequence the house and theatre were built at Bayreuth.

Wagner's unpopularity filled me with absolute amazement, for at that time I had no faintest notion of how universally greatness is disliked and persecuted, and I knew enough about Wagner to feel sure he deserved admiration and a certain reverence.

While a student at Heidelberg a year before, I had met a Jew named Louis Waldstein, brother of the Charles Waldstein who has since come to some honour as a Cambridge professor; and Louis Waldstein really understood Wagner. I had gone to the theatre at Mannheim with him and heard "Der Fliegende Hollaender" and "Lohengrin" and "Tannhaeuser" time and again; I had sat up nights while Waldstein explained to me the leading motives of these dramas and played them over on the piano.

So when I heard that Wagner was in Munich, I was on fire to meet him.

"Where's he living?" I asked, and Vogl told me that he was staying near the Englischer Garten, in the house of a Fräulein Schmidt, who let rooms and kept boarders.

Next morning I went to call on Fräulein Schmidt. She told me that she could only let three rooms at a time,

but her price was so much below what I was paying at the Vierjahreszeiten Hotel that I transferred my belongings to her house that same afternoon.

After a day or so I brought Fräulein Schmidt some flowers and gave her some theatre tickets, which pleased her very much, and hinted that I should like to meet Wagner. Her face changed immediately, and she had a very expressive face. She was a woman, at that time, of perhaps thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, tall, with a good figure, nice-looking, but a little staid.

"Oh my," she cried doubtfully, "I'd have to ask him first; he's sometimes very irritable. I introduced him once to a Herr Professor—and he told me never to do it again; said the professor was a fool, and he couldn't stand fools. He is sometimes very cross. If you meet him, you'll have to be very careful; you will be, won't you?"

"Of course I will," I replied. "Besides, I have a great admiration for him, and I would like to tell him how much his music means to me."

"That will please him," she said. "He likes praise—a good deal of praise. I'll find an opportunity and ask him, but you must not blame me if he refuses."

"Of course I shan't," I smiled. "It is very kind indeed of you to try."

But in spite of my flowers and little presents in the shape of tickets for the opera, etc., a fortnight elapsed and I had not seen Wagner except once, when I met him by chance at the door of the house. His appearance surprised me. He was below middle height, and broad, though rather thin; he wore glasses; his eyes were greyish-blue; his nose Jewish-long and rather heavy. The feature of his face, however, was his chin—a hard,



bony, prominent chin, with which as a ploughshare he drove to the front everywhere. I noticed he was irritably quick and abrupt in his movements. As I passed him in the doorway I bowed, smiling; he just nodded, as if he wanted nothing to do with me. The chance meeting revived my desire to know him, and I approached Fräulein Schmidt again.

"Why not let us meet at dinner?" I proposed. "Try and arrange it."

A day or so later she said to me: "It is for Tuesday, but he only said he would see you after I told him you were an American and a great admirer of his. Take great care, won't you? He's very crochetty!"

I reassured her, for indeed I was grateful to her.

On the Tuesday we all met at dinner. Fräulein Schmidt had invited another lady, who spoke with bated breath to the *Meister*, and I took my tone a little from her and scored my first success by telling him how we used to form knots of ten or twenty students and go across from Heidelberg to Mannheim to hear his operas, and on our return spend the night playing over the *Leit-Motiven* of the different scores.

He listened, but to my astonishment said a little curtly:

"That's not my music; 'Der Fliegende Hollaender' and even 'Tannhaeuser' and 'Lohengrin' are merely German music, a continuation of the 'Freischuetz' of Weber. If I had never been born that would have got itself written, or something like it about as good."

I felt snubbed, but saw he hadn't meant any rebuff. I wondered afterwards what he would have said twenty years before to anyone who treated "Tannhaeuser" and "Lohengrin" as negligible.

I did not agree with him, but it was not my cue to contradict; so, while still praising the early operas, I confessed that "my favourite of all operas was 'Die Meistersinger,' though the second act of 'Tristan' was a miracle and even dearer to me."

Then I saw his eyes change. The pupils seemed to dilate, the eyes to grow deeper in colour, and his whole face was transfigured, the true Wagner—genial and impassioned—coming into sight.

"That is nearer the true faith," he said, smiling happily.

And then I let myself go, and told him how the passion in "Tristan and Isolde's" magnificent love duet moved me, and the victory that was a perpetual encouragement and inspiration in the "Meistersinger"; the whole music lifting higher and higher in great waves of harmony to a supreme triumph.

"It must have been due to some great success in your own life?" I questioned. "Was it not? Perhaps some early triumph."

"I had no early triumphs," he replied shortly, and the light died out of his face. "My success with 'Rienzi' in Dresden in 1842, or with 'Lohengrin' in Vienna twenty years later, may have had something to do with it. That 'Lohengrin' celebration was a great event coming after the blank misery and defeat in Paris. But I am sure patriotic feeling or some nonsense of that sort was at the bottom of it. Paris wouldn't have 'Tannhaeuser' even when the Emperor wanted it. Vienna cheered 'Lohengrin,' but would not have my 'Tristan and Isolde' ! . . ."

A gloomy bitterness seemed to emanate from him, and then came the great word: "I was over thirty years in the wilderness before reaching the promised land, and

that's too long, much too long for any man. . . ."

He moved me profoundly: everything in him, I thought—bitterness, enthusiasm, and the insight that enabled him to understand that his success in Vienna was mere patriotic revolt. He had only got just enough success to call out the very best in him continually—and the triumph came when the work had all been done. Perhaps the reflection came that he was fortunate in his misfortunes, for, at least, he had completed his work.

This first disjointed talk showed me that Richard Wagner was a really great man. And what words he found! That "thirty years in the wilderness" proved the man's quality!

I noticed this first evening that he was very careful in what he ate and drank: he broke up the party early, excusing himself briefly, and going away after shaking hands with me and bowing to the ladies.

In the days that followed he became the chief subject of our conversations. Fräulein Schmidt, womanlike, told me of his love of gorgeous silk dressing-gowns and silk underclothes, too, of the finest. This rather astonished me, because, except in summer, silk is not good for underclothing in Munich. The proximity of the Bavarian Alps makes it a dangerous town to live in; there are frequent cold winds, even in summer, a treacherous climate like that of Madrid.

Then she explained that Wagner had some form of skin irritation or disease—erysipelas, or something of that sort—and that silk prevented the itching.

I noticed, as I have said, that he was careful about what he ate, and Fräulein Schmidt told me that he suffered very badly from indigestion and had to take great care.

"I have to fetch him hot water," she added, "very often," and suddenly she astonished me by a word of insight. "There is more spirit than strength in him," she concluded.

It was true; one could see that the spirit was wearing out the flesh covering, wearing it thin, threadbare even. His hair was already sparse and grey, and the hair round his neck and under his jaws was quite grey too, and thin; yet he was only sixty-five or sixty-six, though he looked like an old, old man.

We met again, I remember, one evening at the entrance to the house, and the moon was out, though the sunlight still lingered in the sky. I said something about watching for the "holder Abendstern," and repeated the line:

"Oh, du mein holder Abendstern."

He smiled pleasantly, and said a few words of no importance.

I told him that "Fidelio" was about to be given in the opera house and that the Vogls were going to sing, and how I admired the overture and the aria in the prison: "Sie fuehrt mich zur Freiheit in's himmlische Reich."

He smiled again. "Might one ask," I began, "what you are working on, Meister?"

"Come up some afternoon and we'll talk about it," he said pleasantly, and passed before me through the door.

I went once or twice, and heard about "Parsifal," and not only the music of the future, about which I knew a good deal, but, strange to say, about the religion of the future, which seemed to me very like Christianity Bays-

watered down to practicable strength. At that time I was very much opposed to Christianity, and regarded it as a sort of disease, so I did not care much for what Wagner had to say about the religion of the future, but I pretended admiration and excited interest, and so won bit by bit to greater intimacy.

At that time he seemed to think "Parsifal" his greatest work: "That's where I give my whole soul," he said to me once; but if you praised "Parsifal" over long, he would recall "The Ring" or the "Meistersinger."

I spoke to him once about his silk underclothes, and he told me the whole story quite frankly: "I think it was the privations in Paris in those dreadful years, '41 and '42, that gave me first indigestion. Then after '48, when I was driven from Dresden to Zurich, I got this sort of skin rash—some doctors call it erysipelas, because they don't know what it is—but it plagued me for years. I used to scratch myself till I bled.

"I found out that silk prevented a good deal of the irritation, and I told Fräü von Wesendonck, who was very good to me, and she sent me a dressmaker who undertook to make silk underclothes for me, and silk dressing-gowns. I gave her a large order. She was astonished, but evidently Fräü von Wesendonck had told her that I was a king of art, so she went off and did the work and sent me the things, and I was able to go on with my work much more comfortably.

"At the end of about a month the dressmaker came wanting to be paid. I told her I had no money. She said: 'But you must have money; you could not order so many suits without money.' I said to her, 'The simple truth is that if I had ordered one dressing-gown and three suits, you would have wanted the money imme-



diately, but the order was so big that you deceived yourself into thinking I was very rich, and gave me credit. Now you will have to wait, my good lady.'

"I knew quite well," he added, "that the frontier was only an hour away, and if I were bothered I could go across."

"But you paid her later?" I asked.

"Oh, of course," he shouted; "of course. I hated to be in debt, and the very first money I got a little later from King Ludwig, the first 200,000 gulden I spent in paying my debts. I paid her threefold. I was very grateful to her."

I think this story probably true, because when, just before her death, his first wife heard that he was accused of having treated her badly and left her in destitution, she wrote to the papers to say that nothing could be further from the truth; that as soon as Wagner had money, he gave it royally, and more than she even needed or expected.

Wagner went on: "The idiots say if the artist wants this or that, let him pay for it like an ordinary man. The artist often wants luxuries to better his art, to increase his gift to men. I've won through and done all my work, and that's the proof I was right. Success is the crown of an artist's work: no one now denies it to me. What men call luxuries are sometimes more necessary to us than bread. We artists don't live by bread alone."

I nodded; I understood that even then, and I admired him for taking what men would not give, though I'd have admired him more if he had not needed to take.

In spite of my ever-growing sympathy and admiration

for him, one day I nearly spoiled myself for ever with him.

There had appeared in some paper a bitter criticism of him and his work. The critic declared that he was a mere favourite of the King, a chamber-musician without genius, and with a very imperfect knowledge of music.

Half out of *Schadenfreude* and half from an American youth's eagerness to see what would happen, I took him the article and showed it to him. He read it through, then jumped up and threw the sheet on the floor.

"You oughtn't to have shown me that," he exclaimed, "it can do nothing but harm. The man is a liar and slanderer."

"Oh, I am sorry," I cried, and indeed his intense, angry excitement showed me how foolish I had been.

"I don't blame the journalist for not understanding my genius," he went on passionately. "No man on a daily paper is required to understand genius; he cannot be expected to know anything about it. It takes genius to recognise genius; when a journalist says I have none, it doesn't matter; it merely means he is a journalist. But this writer is a musician. When he speaks of music, he knows what he is talking about. There and there," he cried, pointing to the article, "he shows musical knowledge. When he tells his readers that I am not a musician, he lies, and knows that he is lying. I was a great conductor before I was twenty, and for years earned my living as an operatic conductor; I have enlarged the orchestra, too, out of all recognition. That's why you should not have shown the lying screed to me. Mere slanderous lies do no one any good; they do genius a great deal of harm, unluckily!"

"You have no idea how sorry I am," I said, and indeed I felt a certain contrition; I had no notion he would take the foolish attack so to heart.

But he went on thundering against the critics for more than an hour.

"It's all envy and malice," he barked. "Nine mediocrities out of ten are base and vile; they hate you because you have climbed the heights. One gives of one's best, and the mediocrities loathe you for it. . . . One of these days they'll know who I am, and the name of Wagner will stand high above their calumnies. . . ."

When we were parting, he said to me: "Please don't show me such slanders again; they hurt and don't help. I've been annoyed with such calumnies ten thousand times."

I assured him warmly I would never offend again in that way, and I quoted the sacred words:

*"Forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

He looked at me earnestly, and the anger died out of his face; his eyes showed a sort of despair, an abyss of tearless misery; and he began in an utterly different tone: "*Mein guter Junge!* You, too, may learn in time what a dreadful task is the artist's, to create a new world as perfect as possible, eternally dissatisfied with what you have done, always hoping for some diviner achievement, and, as if it was not enough to be thus spurred and harassed and driven by your own *daimon*, the crowd mock at you, and those who should help stand aside and sneer, till you almost doubt your own soul; no life so hard as ours—none."

I bowed in silence; the sadness in his face and voice

were testimony enough to the dark hours he had passed through, and the bitter waters.

Other talks I remember that may, too, be recorded:

"Meister," I began one day, "you told me once that I could know all about music if I gave time and study to it. Why do I like Mozart so excessively?"

"Mozart is beloved by all of us," he said, "musicians and the rest, for the sheer beauty in him—his lovely melodies."

"His characterisation is what strikes me as so fine," I pursued. "Cherubino, for instance, is revealed in *voix de sapete* and the great lady in her arias—characterisation like Shakespeare's, or de Musset's."

"True," replied Wagner, thoughtfully, "those are the things you say that show an original mind and promise more—perhaps in poetry—eh?"

To change the talk, I cried: "Oh, Meister, please tell me about the greatest musicians and how you would rank them!"

He shrugged his shoulders: "Mozart and Beethoven, of course, and Bach; then Handel and Weber. Handel was a high priest of our art. His oratorios are like cathedrals——"

"But you, Meister?" I persisted. "You are the greatest of them all, aren't you?"

"In opera, yes, I think so," he said, in cool appraisal.

"You may yet hear it said," he went on, "that in orchestral harmonies the step from Bach to Beethoven is hardly longer than the step from Beethoven to Wagner."

This extravagant self-estimate, as it seemed to me, emboldened me to ask him about his life and the sources of

his inspiration. I had heard (it was, indeed, the common talk among musicians) that his liaison with Madame von Wesendonck, with whom he had lived in Switzerland, had given Wagner the passion-music of the "Tristan." "Was she, in fact, the Isolde of that astonishing second act?" was the question always in my heart, if not on my tongue.

Time and again, whenever indeed I got him in a good humour, I came to the burning point, and once he answered me with some directness: "The artist can only give what he has felt," he said, "but it is unlikely that he will get all from any one person."

On another similar occasion, he combatted the idea that English women were nearly always cold: "Just as they are sometimes astoundingly beautiful," he said, "so they are sometimes rarely endowed," and then he spoke of one English woman he met and followed to the south of France, to Bordeaux, who was a wonder of passionate feeling; he had admired her intensely, and had won her love I believe.

On another occasion: "The strongest passion in a man," he said, "usually comes between thirty-five and forty-five," and then he added, with a smile: "it's earlier in women, isn't it? But then," he added, with a shrug, "who can tell what women feel, or when they feel most—*verschlossene Geschoepfe, raethselhaft!*" (reticent creatures, riddles almost unreadable).

In spite of constant thought and many efforts, I could not get much more out of him: I was diffident, in spite of my admiration, and it was only occasionally that he would speak at all on such intimate personal subjects; the difference of age between us was a barrier which I regret the more, because he and Goethe and Heine live



with Shakespeare in my thought as the greatest and most passion-vexed of mortals.

He resented criticism always with peculiar, singular acerbity; at that time I had the foolish idea that there was some approach to truth in every honest opinion; but he wouldn't hear of it; all criticism of his work was mere "blind envy and hate," was his favourite phrase; "men find fault with their betters because of their own limitations," was his settled conviction. Only once did I ever hear any self-questionings from his lips.

"They all find fault and reject me," he said one day, as if speaking to himself, "just as they all found fault with Heine; was it——"; and he broke off abruptly. "Is there perhaps too much theatre in me, too much searching after stage pictures and scenic effects? . . .

"I don't think so; but I wish I knew certainly." He went on still in self-communing:

"There's nothing harder on this earth than to see the limitations of one's own genius. I see that I followed Weber inevitably; but who will follow me in that same sense, and supply some unforeseen shortcoming of mine? . . .

"We cannot know. We are prisoned in our own limitations and in our lifetime. The future is shut to us; no inspiration takes us across the gulf." And then a new vein of thought, that was evidently habitual: "No one was ever attacked with such malignancy as I have been; when I was poor, they all sneered; now successful, they all slander. Fancy Berlioz vilifying me!"

"Berlioz?" I exclaimed in surprise. "Where? when?"

"In some Paris paper, *The Musical Gazette*, I think it was called. I've been attacked more persistently and ferociously than anyone at any time."

"Jesus?" I suggested.

He smiled and nodded, flattered, I could see.

"In 'Parsifal' I hope to show the *Religion of the Future* as well as I've shown the Art of the Future in the 'Meistersinger' and the 'Ring.' "

The words stuck in my gizzard: "The step from Bach to Beethoven is not so great as the step from Beethoven to Wagner." The summit of all conceit, I thought it.

Yet twenty years later Wagner's prediction was fulfilled. Arnold Dolmetsch, the Belgian musician, said one evening in London: "In dramatic music Wagner is as much above Beethoven as Beethoven is above Bach."

Why are we so slow to recognise living greatness? Why does it take so long for genius to come into its kingdom?

Wagner always took a nap after the midday meal about two o'clock till three or so. Then I could usually see him and he'd go for a walk in the Englischer Garten. But he often suffered from indigestion and had to keep lying down. He was then rather irritable, rude even sometimes. I attributed much of this to indigestion but I was wrong; it was chiefly spiritual.

One phrase I remember he used often: "*The burden is too heavy; the stupid people too numerous!*"

He had not to endure the torment much longer. Like Shakespeare, he had scarcely finished his creative work when death took him!

In 1882 rehearsals of "Parsifal" began at Bayreuth. The first performance was given on July 26. The solemn story created a profound impression; critics who had found little to please them in the "Ring" admitted that "Parsifal" was a great work. But the exertion told severely on the great composer's health. He fainted

after one rehearsal and on recovering exclaimed: "Once more I have beaten death."

But the weakness of his heart had made dangerous progress. After the "Parsifal" performance he went back with his family to Venice and lived in the Vendramin Palace on the Grand Canal. Liszt came in the middle of September and spent a couple of months with them, and at Christmas Wagner conducted his juvenile symphony in honour of his wife, Cosima, whose birthday was December 25. Wagner did not over-rate his boyish composition but he puts on record that the symphony "really seemed to please the audience." At the end of the performance he laid down his *bâton* declaring that he would never conduct again.

On January 13 Liszt left and Wagner began to discuss with great eagerness the preparations for the Bayreuth festival of the summer.

On February 13, 1883, he stayed in bed all the morning. At noon he called the maid and ordered luncheon. After luncheon she heard Wagner cry out and running into the room, found him in agony. "Call my wife and the doctor," he gasped. His wife reached his side while he was still alive, but when the doctor came Wagner had passed away.

King Ludwig sent Adolph Gross, a Bayreuth banker who had long been a supporter of Wagner, to Venice as his representative. Venice offered a public funeral, but the widow declined it. Silently through the canals on February 16 went a gondola draped in black. A special mourning car carried the remains to Bayreuth and Wagner was laid to rest in Wahnfried.

The "Parsifal" performances in Bayreuth were given in the summer but without the presence of the widow,

who would not even see Liszt, her father. But the following year Cosima took up the work of continuing the festivals and almost to our own day has dedicated herself to the task of producing her husband's masterpieces—a great woman and noble helpmate!

And now, June, 1923, I read in the paper that Cosima wishes to inaugurate a yearly festival at Bayreuth in Wagner's honour. I had thought she was dead: but it seems I was mistaken: she is alive and still eager to immortalise her husband's memory. But why bind Wagner to Bayreuth: he lives in the heart of the German people for ever, and indeed is lord of an ever-widening circle, of all those who have been moved by his music and inspired by his genius.

### III

## IVAN TURGENIEF

#### A SNAPSHOT

**M**OST of my readers know that my position as an editor in London for a quarter of a century helped me to meet a goodly number of people who were either famous, or who afterwards became famous. But this is not all the truth. From the time I went to Paris in 1877 I made up my mind to meet as many men of note as I could.

Keats speaks somewhere or other of his religion being a reverence of great men; without being Keats, one can confess the same passionate admiration. But many of my meetings with great men were failures, and I'm minded to tell of one of them, where the fault, I believe, was wholly mine.

There are occurrences in life that show immaturity, and when one recalls them in later years they fill one with shamefaced wonder.

Some time in the summer of 1880 I used to meet a tall, well-dressed man twice or three times a week on the bridge at Bougival.

I lived in a little villa at Argenteuil that summer, and my favourite walk in the morning was along the Seine bank and over the bridge. This tall man came from the other side of the river, and we used to pass and repass without speaking. One day, however, I asked him the



time, and he answered me and seemed amused by my halting French.

"You are English?" he asked, and when I said I was an American he seemed interested.

Next time we met he bowed to me, smiling, and I stopped and we chatted. Suddenly he said: "I think we should know each other; my name is Turgénief."

I lifted my hat: "I am delighted, honoured; my name is Harris, utterly unknown, undistinguished; but everyone knows Ivan Turgénief."

"You are young yet," he remarked courteously, and so the ice was broken, and in ten minutes or so I found that he knew English and German as well as French. That made talk easy for me. I quickly told him how greatly I admired "The Journal of a Sportsman" and "Fathers and Sons," and how I believed that his Bazarof, the realist, was a figure of world literature as significant as Hamlet or Don Quixote. He smiled with kind eyes at my enthusiastic outpouring, but said little.

In repose his face with its crown of silver hair seemed sad; I could not imagine the reason; I did not dream then that, as the illusions of life vanish with the years, it is only the bravest souls who can look back without regret or forward without apprehension.

It was his great height and the large well-cut nose and massive strong chin that gave him an aloof, aristocratic air; for the eyes under the straight brows peered questioning while the lips were sensuous full—a many-sided personality.

One day, he asked me quietly if I knew the Viardots.

"The name," I replied, "of the great singer, is familiar to me, but I have not the honour of knowing her."

He must have seen that I spoke without suspicion or

malice, for he said gently that he was staying with them and that he had spoken of me, and if I would come to lunch they would be pleased. But I was painfully conscious that my French was bad and my accent atrocious, and to me it was like showing myself in ill-fitting, ill-made clothes; so I excused myself somewhat lamely, I imagine, for on seeing his surprise I blurted out the truth. He smiled as if amused, and the opportunity was gone.

For perhaps a month or so we met two or three times a week; but usually when we reached his end of the bridge I would lift my hat and take my leave.

I knew Turgénief was a great man, but I did not know how to win his confidence or provoke confidences from him. He was always gentle, courteous, but his courtesy kept him a little aloof, and I felt vaguely that I was outside, yet did not know how to get in. Had he been less formally polite, I might have ventured.

Years later in London, after I had begun to write stories, I read him again, and then realised what I had missed; a flood of questions thronged to my mind, questions that would certainly have interested him and provoked enthralling answers, but alas! it was too late, the opportunity was gone for ever.

He was a great lover, Turgénief. In one of his novels he prepares the reader for a hundred pages for the introduction of the heroine; he must have been in love with her; was it Pauline Viardot? I have always fancied that it was; there was something exotic in the heroine; of course, it's only a guess of mine. Then, too, his "First Love" is a study of calf-love; are all big men when boys physically cowards in love? Shakespeare hasn't a trace of diffidence, nor has Heine; but they were both small.

I wanted so to ask Turgénief about his Rudin, the talker of genius; why did he make him so young and so unsympathetic? Was he painting himself deliberately as Rudin? I feel certain he was; even in French he was an extraordinary talker, and he himself tells us that Russian, in his opinion, is one of the greatest languages in the world, if not the greatest. But why did he not put wonderful talk in Rudin's mouth? He tells us that Rudin was a great talker, but gives us no proof of it. This is almost a confession on his part that he had identified himself so perfectly with Rudin that he never noticed the omission. For Turgénief was a great artist, and great artists don't make such slips. When Balzac is portraying Z. Marcas, he does not forget to lend his puppet original thoughts in sociology and in life. In the same way, if Turgénief had looked on Rudin as a mere character, he'd have been delighted in clothing him with the magic of original and inspiring thought, or at least have given him a fascinating story or two to tell.

Again, why did Turgénief take so little interest in the Russian peasant, and why did he hold himself so aloof from the social question? And why did he praise Tolstoi so extravagantly? for Christianity put Tolstoi in blinkers, so to speak, and the enforcement of the moral lesson by the heroine's suicide, injured "Anna Karenina" as a work of art, and I could never forgive that traitorism to the ideal.

I remember later still how some letters of Turgénief to Russian friends were published after his death, and created an immense sensation in Paris. In these letters it appeared he talked of Daudet and Zola and other French writers as from a height, as Shakespeare might have talked of Fletcher or Dekker and Daudet and Zola

raged and fastened on a patronising word or two that Turgénief had written about Flaubert and tore him to pieces for it: "Did the Russian seriously imagine that he was greater than Flaubert?"

They took Turgénief's want of reverence as a sort of betrayal of friendship; "we all treated him so well," they kept repeating, "made him free of the guild, so to speak, and all the while behind our back he was denigrating us, speaking disdainfully of our best."

I saw nothing of all this in the letters; the French are very insular; Turgénief is incomparably more important than Zola or even Flaubert; he spoke of them frankly as he felt, with kindliness even; why should he pretend a reverence that he didn't feel?

Like all really great men, he was very generous to his rivals; his praise of Tolstoi is overpitched, I think; I always wonder what he thought in his heart of Dostoievsky; and I wish, wish, wish I could have met him ten years later than I did, when I should perhaps have been nearer his level and able to get to know him intimately.

If Hell is paved with good intentions, Heaven is surely vaulted with lost opportunities of enjoyment; and that's worse.

## IV

### CHARLIE CHAPLIN

**L**IKE everyone else in Christendom, I have seen Charlie Chaplin in the "movies" time and again, till he has become for me the chief attraction, and I go to the "movies" always when his pictures are being given.

A year or so ago I gave a little piece of his autobiography. He had modelled his walk, I found out, and his big feet from an English public-house wastrel, and dates his success from the moment of his imitation.

Since then I have had the pleasure of meeting Charlie Chaplin in person. I have talked with him for hours on several occasions; with his brother and his secretary, he came to one of my lectures, and afterwards reduced me to half-hysterical laughter by his brilliant impersonation of my peculiarities. He is, indeed, the greatest mimic I have ever met. When he talked to me of the late Sir Herbert Tree, he involuntarily assumed Tree's attitudes, favourite gestures, even his hesitating tones and his bursts of bad epigram—a surprising re-incarnation.

Then he told of how Sir Herbert spoke of his daughter, "little Iris," and how he was hoping to take the little child on his knee and lose some of his shy embarrassment at Tree's overwhelming personality; but the next moment the door opened and Iris came into the room—a tall young woman, with absolute self-possession; a



cigarette in one hand, a cocktail in the other. Charlie imitated Iris and reeled off a line or two of her poetry, so that again I shouted with laughter. A most surprising mimic—a mimic of genius, and therefore a great actor.

It dawned upon me gradually that Charlie Chaplin was about the best actor I had ever met; astonishingly endowed, indeed. I asked him why he did not go on the ordinary stage. He immediately began quoting Hamlet—"The play's the thing"—and I found myself asking him seriously, so impressed was I with his talents, why he did not play Hamlet.

"I should love to," he confessed. "I think certain sides of the character have never been brought out as they should be. There was a humorous side in him, don't you think?"

"Of course," I said. "Does not Hamlet himself, even in his disdain of the courtiers, show a sympathetic appreciation of humour and he praises Yorick at the end as 'a fellow of infinite jest, most excellent fancy.' But how far you can show the humour in him, and yet keep to the character of Hamlet, I don't know. It would be a very interesting experiment. I wish you would try and let me be present.

“‘God send Rome such another sight,  
And send me there to see.’”

He laughed.

#### A MAN OF GENIUS

But Charlie Chaplin is something more than a humorist and great actor. He is a man of genius. He is absolutely devoid of pose, and pretends to no scholarship.

He tells how he has come from poor people, and yet he has read a great deal of the best and is a most interesting companion to all sorts and conditions of men. One little story his brother told of him should be recorded. The brother is four years older than Charlie, and he said when he was about twelve and Charlie seven or eight, Charlie was very small indeed, but preternaturally precocious. When they came across a barrel organ Charlie would dance and sing, and, as soon as a crowd collected, Charlie would take off his hat and run round collecting the pennies; then he would bolt with the money, to the rage and exasperation of the organ-grinder.

Surely it speaks volumes for such a man when he keeps his sympathy for the poor and outcast in spite of his most astonishing success. Ten years ago, as he says, he was glad to get two and a half dollars a day; a month after he was worth half a million a year; and yet he is absolutely unspoiled.

The other night, after talking with us for some hours, he went out and took a taxi—to go back, as I thought, to his hotel. Instead of that, he wandered off from hotel to hotel; none of them could take him in, they were all full. He chummed up with the driver of the taxi, and about four o'clock in the morning the driver proposed to take him home and find a bed for him in his house. The adventure tempted Charlie. He confided to the driver who he was. The driver was delighted, but said:

“Don't give your name; my wife wouldn't believe me; she'd think I was trying to make a fool of her, and there would be a row. I shall just say that you are a fare that couldn't get in anywhere; I often have fares like that in New York.”

With all his heart Charlie entered into the fun, and they drove out to the Bronx. He was taken on tiptoe into a very small apartment, and, with his finger on his lips, the driver showed him a hall bedroom where there was already a twelve-year-old boy asleep in a tiny bed. Unceremoniously the father pushed him to one side, and told Charlie he could sleep on the edge of the bed. The millionaire actor chuckled with glee, undressed, and went to bed. In the morning the boy awoke early, peered at his new companion, and vanished. There was loud whispering in the hall; an elder sister came to the door and looked in. "Yes, it is Charlie," she said, and the whispering grew louder. In a few minutes she returned, followed by a cortege of Jewish children eager to see the famous hero, and the children were followed by their elders; and Charlie, the uncrowned king, held impromptu court with such faithful and admiring subjects as surely no monarch possesses.

And he told the story with a hundred gestures, so that the Jews of the Bronx lived for you as if they had suddenly been brought before your eyes by the waving of a wizard's wand.

Far away from the din and glare of the make-believe stage, I have come to know the real Charlie Chaplin, a far more interesting personality than the movie star. He does not wear a moustache; his features are well cut; large eyes, large head, too, and excellently shaped; lips astonishingly mobile and well formed; a very handsome face, and a handsome, slight figure, with tiny hands and feet.

"The feet I understand," I said, "you had to disguise, but why wear that moustache?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "I had to caricature

myself to pin myself in the memory of the public. The moustache and the feet have done it."

And then he gave us an unforgettable experience. His brother darkened the room in his hotel, put up a sheet, and Charlie's six-film picture, "The Kid," unrolled itself before our eyes. It was far and away the best thing that Charlie Chaplin had done up to that time; a real story, magnificently rendered. How Charlie finds a little kid, precociously intelligent, and trains him to be a fellow-conspirator, must be seen to be fully appreciated. One scene that I shall never forget is that in which the kid goes and breaks the windows in advance, and Charlie comes afterwards to mend them. How the kid gets caught by policemen, how he gets away, and the various vicissitudes of the street Odyssey are simply enthralling. At the end, Chaplin's view of Heaven, a comic goody-goody Paradise with flashes of intermittent humour, and the final happy consummation.

A great piece, "The Kid," and Charlie Chaplin is a great man and a great artist.

His difficulties with his wife have been told by her in a dozen news sheets, and therefore a true picture of the pair may now at length be given.

#### THE MILDRED CHAPLIN COMEDY

Every morning in the paper a fresh appeal appeared from Mildred Chaplin: the injured lady wept, protested, cajoled, threatened all in a breath. One morning a change: she published the following:

"My final statement: Mr. Chaplin is not a Socialist. He is a great artist, a very serious personality, and a real intellectual." Yes, those are her very words; and

she continues: "The world will be amazed at the intensity of his mind." What can have happened? I ask myself. Has Charlie weakened and paid without counting?

I read on: "I have no desire to obtain half of his fortune. (No?) I will not hinder the sale of his latest moving picture." (Whew, the wind sets in that quarter, does it?)

And then: "I am entitled to a settlement. (Eh?) I am too ill, physically and mentally, to work at present, and this notoriety and exposition of my personal affairs is very disagreeable to me." (Really? You needn't indulge in it, madame, unless you want to.)

Finally: "He is a great artist, a brilliant man, plays the violin, 'cello, piano, and so forth. . . . I have already filed papers against him." Well, well, and again well.

Here is Charlie's story of talks with his wife on the 'phone about their divorce.

"Is that you, Charlie? It's me, Mildred. I'm ill and have no money. Won't you give me \$50,000, and settle all this disagreeable law business? You will. You're a dear: I knew a great artist like you couldn't be mean. If you knew how I hate to quarrel and dispute. Let us meet at my lawyer's in an hour, eh? Good-bye, dear. Good-bye till then."

Quarter of an hour later:

"Is that you, Charlie? Oh, I'm so sorry, but my lawyer won't let me take fifty thousand; he says it's ridiculous. Won't you give a hundred thousand, and I can satisfy him? Please: I'm so nervous and ill. You will? Oh, you——! Well, you're just you—the one man in



the world. I can't say more. Now for that dreadful lawyer, and then we'll meet and just sign. How are you? Well! Oh, I'm so glad. In half an hour, dear."

Quarter of an hour later:

"Charlie! What can I say? I'm just heart-broken, and I've such a headache. That lawyer says I mustn't settle for a hundred thousand. His fee is goodness knows how much. I must have at least a hundred and fifty thousand. What am I to do? Mamma says—— You will? Oh, my! I'm so glad. I don't know how to thank you. It's your last word, you say? All right, Charlie. I'm satisfied. In half an hour, then."

Ten minutes later:

"It's no good, Charlie. I can't settle for that; it's really too little. You see, Charlie! Charlie! Did you ring off? Or is it the filthy exchange? Oh, dear! Damn! D——n!"

Charlie Chaplin is a master of comedy in life, as he is on the stage; an artist in refined humour, he can laugh even at himself and his own emotions. On the point of leaving Pasadena for a trip to New York, he rang his wife up.

"Mildred, it's me, Charlie. Will you take half a million dollars, and settle this ridiculous claim? You will? No, I'm not a darling; but meet me at my lawyer's in an hour, and we can sign."

Quarter of an hour later:

"Mildred, dear: I'm so sorry, but my lawyer won't let me give half a million; he says a year's earnings for a week's marriage is too much. He says a hundred thousand is more than generous. Will I listen to you? Of course, I will. Talk away. . . ."

A woman's voice, high pitched: "You're no man!

Again you've let me down and made a fool of me. You've no character. I'll teach you . . ." (Left talking.)

Charlie Chaplin strolls away from the 'phone with a smile on his lips and a little sub-acid contempt for human, and especially for feminine, nature.

#### WITH CHARLIE CHAPLIN TO SING-SING

The other morning, quite unexpectedly, I was called to the 'phone by Charlie Chaplin's friend and secretary, Tom Harrington: "Charlie wants to know would you go with him to visit Sing-Sing?"

"When?" I asked.

"This morning, now! If so, I'll bring the car for you."

"Come; of course, I'll go."

"But you're not well enough," warned my secretary; "you said you were dizzy and feeling ill!"

"I'm going, all the same," I replied; "isn't Jim Larkin at Sing-Sing? Besides, I've never seen the inside of an American prison, and with Charlie Chaplin—I'd never forgive myself if I didn't go."

I profess myself of the rapidly increasing band who believe that Charlie Chaplin is one of the great artists of this time, one who ranks above Dan Leno or even Chevalier, a master of laughter, of comedy,—low or high. And to say of a man that he is a great artist ought to imply that you regard him as one of the choice and master spirits of the age, one of those whose judgment is subtly fair because he stands in true relation with this visible world, as well as with the viewless mysteries.

There are very few men on Manhattan Island with

whom I would care to spend a whole day, but Chaplin is one of them.

In half an hour we set out in the auto; I had so many things to ask him that I started off without preliminary:

"In your two months on the other side, who was the most interesting man you met?"

"Oh, Wells," he replied at once. "Wells, certainly.

"A fine mind and very interesting; with, of course, all sorts of knowledge that I had not got and did not pretend to; taking for granted, too, all sorts of reading in me that I had not done; but lightning quick and kindly.

"I saw a film of 'Kipps' with him. It was very bad, the mechanical part of it astonishingly bad, and I said: 'You mustn't allow this, Wells, you know; it will never do.' I wanted to help him. The chief actor, a very nice young fellow, came over to us afterwards, and Wells twitched my arm, evidently fearing that I might continue my criticism, and said: 'Say something kind to the boy.'

"I thought it very sweet of him. Of course, I praised the actor. Very interesting man, Wells, and very kind; his eyes, as you have said, very fine."

And then the impish spirit came over him, gilding his recollection, and he turned to me, his eyes dancing.

"Wells introduced me to his son. Oh, such a clever boy, a wonderful boy, 'from Cambridge, Cambridge University, you know,' mimicking Wells's voice and manner. I mightn't know, d'ye see? Everyone in the house," added Charlie, "seemed to be from Cambridge—Cambridge University dons—the Ark of the Covenant must have been in Cambridge."

The imitation was so perfect, the understanding so keen, that I had to smile, for there are many kinds of

snobbery—and intellectual snobbery is one of the most whimsical.

“Who else did you see?” I asked; “that counts, I mean.”

“Oh! I saw Barrie—Sir James Barrie; he is getting old, and takes himself very seriously. He criticised my ‘Kid,’ telling me that all the heavenly part was nonsensical, ‘absurd and worthless.’ The author of ‘Peter Pan,’ ” added Charlie, with dancing eyes again, “the inventor of the crocodile with the clock in its stomach, seemed to think my scene in Heaven absurd and therefore worthless, as if the two adjectives were synonyms,” and Charlie grinned again.

Chaplin has got a smile that not only lights up his eyes and mouth, but lights up the man he is talking about with irresistible, kindly mockery. Of course, everybody knows perfectly well that the absurdities of “Peter Pan” have made Barrie a millionaire.

“You were received by royalty, were you not, Charlie,” I went on, “on your way to Berlin?”

“Yes, yes,” he replied, laughing; and then his face grew thoughtful-sad. “Berlin was terrible; the people all working so hard, but an air of gloom over everything as if they were up against it dreadfully. I wanted to see the slums, the real poor, you know; but there were no slums in Berlin, and in the poorest quarters the children were happy and well dressed. No slums. You attribute that to Bismarck’s wise social legislation, don’t you?”

“All of it,” I replied. “He thought it the first duty of the State to help workmen to work; but then he was the greatest governor that has yet appeared in Europe. If Harding would only imitate his system of land-banks,

he might bring happiness throughout our immense Middle West, and wide-spread well-being."

"It's wonderful in Berlin," Charlie went on. "Prices are so low; we got a lunch at the Adlon Hotel, the best hotel in Berlin, where we stayed—and a very good lunch—that cost, I think, nearly twenty-five cents. The Allies, determined to make Germany pay, will probably find it is at the expense of their own poor. The Germans are being forced to undersell everyone."

Talk like this, witty and wise, and always kindly from Charlie, brought us round a turn to the prison. Oh, it could not be mistaken, even when seen from afar. There it lay in the autumn sunlight, with the beautiful river and the heights beyond, all bathed in glory; there it lay like a vile plague spot; a great bare, yellow exercise yard; a dozen buildings, the nearest a grey stone building with narrow slits of windows for eyes, and bars, bars everywhere. The heart shrank before it.

The next moment we stopped before the prison steps; went down, down, down to the barred gate, which slowly swung open for us. My heart contracted.

Everyone was eager to see Charlie; he was acclaimed as a monarch, as indeed he is: a monarch who can make the whole world loyal with a smile, who can bring joyous laughter to the lips of the world-weary.

After the usual introductions, we were taken in charge by Mr. Thomas McNerny, the principal keeper, a big fellow, six feet odd, with a fine, kindly face, who acted as master of the ceremonies. Nobody, of course, knew Tom Harrington or me, or paid any attention to us, so I was free to use both my eyes.

We were taken first into a long room. As the door opened, McNerny announced "Visitors' Room." There



they were, perhaps a score of prisoners, with thirty or forty people about them. Here in the front a prisoner nursing his baby, who was playing with his hair, while he talked to his wife and apparently a sister; there, another prisoner holding his wife's hands—ininitely pathetic.

"Wonderful, terrible," was Charlie's comment. "How long do you allow visitors?"

"An hour," answered the head keeper. "Of course, if it isn't Sunday, we are not particular about a few minutes"; humanity in the jailer, more humanity than in the judge or lawgivers—States, like fish, go rotten first at the head.

In Brixton Prison, in London, prisoners are not allowed to see their wives and children except in the presence of a warder, who listens to every word. In Brixton, too, the visits are limited to half an hour, and are harder to get. In democratic France, worse still. In America, if Sing-Sing be a fair specimen, the treatment is more humane, as good as in the German prisons, where visits from near relatives, wives and mothers, brothers and sisters, are encouraged.

But we were not to leave the prison with this kindly lifting of the pall. Almost immediately we were taken into a room with heavy muslin curtains; from it you could peep into the bare yard, forty or fifty yards long and perhaps fifteen wide; two men were walking up and down; one a tall warder, the other a short man in grey, with a pipe in his mouth, walking briskly in the sunshine. The head keeper announced shortly: "The next for the Chair."

How awful! I peered through the curtains. The man's hands were in his pocket; he was looking straight

in front of him, coming towards us, nearer and nearer; a puff of smoke from the pipe, and I missed his face as he turned. Charlie put his hand against his heart. "Did you see his face?" he whispered. "As if he were choking down the terrible fear and agony! Tragic, appalling!"

I had not seen the look, but could well believe it. The mere thought of it wiped out any taste for more horrors.

. . . . .

Then the head keeper, who was going back, delivered us over to the doctor, Dr. Amos Squire, and to the head teacher, Mr. Norbert Henzel. The doctor was a man just below middle height, with a keen face and eyes, very business-like, excellently informed. As we followed him, Mr. Henzel said to me: "Did I get your name right? Are you Frank Harris?" Charlie and I had spoken on our way to the prison of the fact that they might object to me, so he had just introduced us as Mr. Harris, Mr. Harrington, quite casually. I was at first taken aback by the recognition, and asked Mr. Henzel not to tell anyone. "Charlie asked me to go with him," I explained, "and I jumped at the chance."

Mr. Henzel said he was very glad to know me; he had read some of my books and enjoyed them, and said if he could do anything for me he would be glad to; he spoke most cordially.

"There is one thing you can do for me," I answered. "Find out where Jim Larkin is, and let me have a word with him." He said he would, adding:

"You know I have to examine all the prisoners, to find out how they are educated, so I asked Larkin where he had been educated and how many years he had

gone to school. He replied casually: 'Oh, my school days were very short; you can take it that I am unlettered.' That 'unlettered,' " said Mr. Henzel, told me a great deal, and I soon found out that, wherever he had got his education, he had got a good deal of it."

"He is one of God's spies," I cried warmly; "a wonderful man. He has got the manners of a great gentleman; you have no idea how perfectly he bore himself at the trial, though there were insulting interruptions from the judge at every moment—uncalled for and malevolent when they were not stupid. Not only has he manners and reading, but wisdom and kindness to boot—an extraordinary man, a great man. He and Debs both in prison. Could any criticism of American government be more damning!"

"They were afraid at first," said Henzel, "that he might use radical propaganda on the prisoners. If they only knew, this is a worse place for radical propaganda than even Wall Street. The prisoners all think Larkin a damned fool for having come here just because he would stand up for others. What have the workmen ever done for him, they say, 'the poor boob!' They all think him rather a fool. And you call him one of the noblest."

"Yes," I said. "We are told pretty early in life to let well alone. It is a good proverb, but no one tells us that it is still more dangerous not to leave ill alone. That's Jim Larkin's fault. He couldn't sit still and see the wrong triumph."

"Be still, my soul, be still; it is but for a season;  
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done."

I was roused by the doctor's voice.

"Twenty-seven per cent. of all the prisoners are syphilitic," he said, "and 60 per cent. have venereal disease of some sort or other."

"Good God!" exclaimed Charlie. "How appalling!"

"Oh, nothing out of the common," replied the doctor. "The returns of the officers in the war showed 25 per cent. syphilitic—one in every four."

"You use 606?" asked Charlie.

"Oh, yes," answered the doctor. "Salversan and mercury. We continue it till the Wassermann test shows that there is not a trace of the bacilli in the blood—a great cure."

How I wished poor little Ehrlich, the discoverer of salversan, had been alive to hear that. How his fine little Jew face would have glowed. I remember his telling me in 1913 how he hoped we should meet at the International Medical Congress that would be held in Munich in 1917. "By then," he cried, "I shall have discovered an absolute cure for consumption, for sleeping sickness, for all the plagues. I have found the way to poison the bacilli of disease."

What faith and hope! But in 1917 there was no International Medical Congress in Munich, and if there had been, Ehrlich could not have been there; he had already passed away.

The doctor went on, evidently interested. "We can cure all the diseased here except the dope fiends, and we can cure them while they are here, but dope long continued seems to break the will power and once they get out again we find that the addicts go back; they are as bad as pickpockets."

"Really?" I cried, "are pickpockets so hard to cure?"

"Impossible to cure," he returned. "Whether it is

vanity in the art or not, I don't know, but ninety out of a hundred come back; once a pickpocket always a pickpocket."

Of course we had to visit the Death House. It was a plain bare room, perhaps fifty feet by thirty, with a heavily barred iron door at the left. The door was not green, as the reporters say, but plain white, like the white-washed walls. Three yards from us stood the chair—a plain yellow wooden armchair with a high back; over the back dangled a wire of five or six strands; on the arms of the chair bands to hold the arms down; bands, too for the feet. The doctor told us how a copper cap is put on the head with a sponge in it filled with salt moistened; the conductivity is improved three-fold by this appliance. To the right of the chair, a wooden partition juts out into the room for some three feet; on this partition, concealed from the chair, the lever to turn the death current off or on, and above it indicators showing the exact voltage: the executioner has only to depress the lever handle.

"As soon as the cap is put on the forehead I try to watch the breath," said the doctor, "and give the signal so that the lungs will be as empty as possible. I generally get it right. If I do, death is instantaneous. The man, through the electric current, dies with the stoppage of breath; strangulation practically. From a minute to a minute and a half and all is over. I don't think the man feels any pain from the moment the lever is pulled; the nerve shock is too tremendous."

The doctor then led the way into the next room, which looked like an operating chamber, because there was a high long table in the centre.

"Here we put the body," he said; "it is carried in

at once; the temperature of the body is 130 degrees; I have tested it by putting a knife and then a thermometer into the stomach—134 or 135 degrees quite usual—the blood is all boiling. The brain heat must be higher still. . . . Oh, yes, I have had several in a day.” “Five, doctor,” the keeper added. “Seven was our biggest day,” returned the doctor casually.

Seven! I thought of the poor creatures holding on to themselves, trying to go to death bravely; the beautiful sunshine, the joy of life, all blotted out in one dreadful moment. When will another Jesus come and stop it all? Man’s inhumanity to man.

. . . . .

They put Charlie Chaplin in the chair; the doctor showed him just how everything was adjusted, just how his arms and feet were fettered and his head thrown back, but when we came away Charlie said: “Worse even than the chair was that man in the yard—the condemned man—and his face. I shall see that till I die.”

#### CHARLIE AS A SOURCE OF JOY

As we passed from building to building, the prisoners gathered and applauded Charlie, twice even cheered him. I could not help admiring the boyish, laughing good-nature he showed in return. Time and again he won all hearts by sheer humanity and tact. You may think this easy: I marvelled at it. He was introduced by the doctor to the barber; he laughed and held out his hand.

“That’s one on me,” he cried, “the doctor sees I



didn't shave to-day—I wish I had time to get it done now.” Of course the barber was delighted.

Half an hour later another cried:

“Where's your moustache, Charlie?”

He turned and retorted whimsically: “Are you, too, from the barber's shop?” And again there was a burst of laughter.

In the more serious cases he was even finer.

The head keeper showed us a young man in a cell alone: solitary confinement for breaking loose a short time ago. The prisoner scarcely lifted his eyes as we entered. Charlie said, half aloud: “What a pity! What a handsome fellow!” And indeed he was good-looking. The kindness won an immediate response; the young fellow looked up brightly and said:

“Nothing serious, Charlie; only for trying to get away. A real movie stunt, eh?”

The repartee was apt and cemented the good-fellowship.

Again, when we were shown some automobiles that the prisoners keep in order and are proud of, one said: “1909 is the date of that one, Charlie; rather behind the times, eh? But then, we're behind the bars, so——” (and a shrug). Charlie said: “If we're free, it's only because we've not been found out. Good luck, boys!”

A little later he was stopped by a jovial old coloured man with a profile very like Dante's, hawk-like, hard and keen, who cried: “I'm Black Joe. I'll be out in 1932. Mind you have a new picture ready, Charlie.”

Charlie took his hat in laughing response, and made it twirl in the air—a trick that brought shouts of laughter. Another time he just danced a grotesque step or two,

and the crowd applauded wildly, as only those could applaud whose days and nights are monotonous and sad.

Charlie, true humorist as he is, never missed the sadness; time and again he stopped: "How dreadful! Look at that cold grey stone building with the narrow slits. How abominable it all is!"

Never once does he separate himself from the prisoners, and the tragedy of their punishment was always with him.

He was at his best when they brought us into a great room with a stage at the left, where movies are shown every day. The actors and operators grouped themselves at once about him with laughing, cordial remarks.

"Give us a spiel, Charlie," cried someone. "A talk," said another.

Charlie turned. "How can I talk to you? What is there to say except that we are all pals in this life, and if I can make you laugh, by God! you can make me cry."

With a wave of his hands he went down the steps.

#### JIM LARKIN

After a visit to the drug shop, the busy doctor handed us over to Mr. Joyce, the superintendent of the industries, who told us that they made stockings, brushes, and all sorts of things, and sold them to institutions: last year goods to the value of \$600,000—the product of 300 men's work.

Mr. Joyce, too, seemed capable and was interesting; he said the men did not work as well as the men outside; their attention flagged in five or six hours. I remembered that the doctor had told me that over 50 per cent.

of the prisoners were morons; that is, with the brain development of children under twelve years of age. No wonder their attention flagged.

Mr. Henzel came to me. "Larkin is in the boot place; he's there now; it's the next room."

Into the next room we went, Mr. Joyce explaining in advance to Charlie all about the making of boots; I with eyes for only one man, for one figure. Suddenly on the other side of the room I caught sight of him. I went across, and our hands met.

"Jim," I cried; "I have done my best again and again, but our Government is brutally indifferent!"

"You never sent me your books," he said.

"I sent them, Jim," I cried; "but you shall have them again. I have a friend here now. Mr. Henzel, the teacher, will pass them on to you; you shall have them within forty-eight hours. We are all still working, you know, for you and Debs."

"I know," said Jim; "I know!"

"How are you in health?" I asked.

"Fine," he said, carelessly, rearing himself to his full six feet two and throwing out his great chest.

"But you broke your leg?" I questioned again.

"It's first-rate now," he said; "they patched it up; I'm all right; but (this in a whisper) is there any chance they might deport us? I want to get back to my people."

"I'll see what can be done," I cried, "you may be sure. We'll all do what we can."

"I know; I know."

"I want you to meet Charlie Chaplin," I said, so I brought Charlie across the room, and they shook hands. Jim at once excused himself. "I had better go off," he said; he didn't want to take up the time of the great vis-

itor; he is the most courteous of gentlemen, with the best of manners—heart manners.

. . . . .

The visit lasted hours; innumerable things in it that I have forgotten, but when we were in the car again I drew Charlie's attention to the fact that they were building another prison on the heights to our right.

Charlie turned to me. "Someone has said that prisons and graveyards are always in beautiful places"; and indeed the location was beautiful, looking out over the great river three miles across to the opposite shore.

"What was your deepest emotion, Charlie?" I asked.

"O!" he said; "the face of the condemned man walking in that yard, with the pipe in his mouth, and the withdrawn eyes—unforgettable, appalling!"

## V

### JOHN TYNDALL

**I** OFTEN wonder why the two names of Tyndall and Huxley were continually used together in my youth: theological hate seems the only explanation; for both were outspoken free thinkers, though in all else unlike; of the two, Tyndall was the first to mean something to me.

It is almost impossible to give any idea of the sensation caused by his presidential address at the Belfast meeting of the British Association in 1874. His praise of matter was like a red flag to the theologic bull. He said:

“I discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life.”

This got him into trouble with men so opposed in thought as James Martineau and Professor Virchow. The discussion with Martineau, which I read carefully at the time, showed me that Tyndall too was a pantheist and admirer of Emerson and, one might almost say, a worshipper of Carlyle—qualities which recommended themselves to me deeply. The boldness of the address, too, made a good many of us younger ones very curious about the man, and from that time on I read all I could get about him.

He was of Anglo-Irish stock, I found, and was born in

County Carlow, Ireland, August 2, 1820. His grandfather was a small landowner; his father was poor, but had brains, and gave the eager lad the best education he could.

John went through the local national school, and was able at nineteen to enter the Ordnance Survey of Ireland as assistant. At two-and-twenty he was selected to join the English Survey. While at Preston, he entered the Mechanics' Institute and attended lectures. It was at this time that Carlyle's "Past and Present" fell into his hands, and deepened his whole outlook upon life. A month or two later, "Heroes and Hero Worship" became a sort of Bible to him.

After a couple of years in the English Survey, he was offered a lucrative post as railway engineer. He held it for three years, till he was about six-and-twenty, and then received an offer from the headmaster of Queenwood College in Hampshire, George Edmondson, to teach mathematics and surveying. This school was the first school in England in which experimental science was practically taught. Among Tyndall's colleagues was Edward Frankland, the lecturer on chemistry. A friendship sprang up between the two men which was to endure for the rest of their lives. They began exchanging instruction in chemistry and mathematics; but Queenwood College did not supply them with the teaching or encouragement they needed, and so they resolved to cut loose and go to Germany.

In the autumn of 1848 they settled at the University of Marburg, a little town where the martyr Tyndale, the translator of the Bible, had fled to escape from his enemies pursuing him for heresy.

John Tyndall always said that from his residence in



Marburg dated his renunciation of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. The great railway "boom" was at its height in England; he was offered all sorts of rewards as a railway engineer, but he was determined to make himself a light for the feet of wandering men, and so he gave day and night to working at chemistry under Bunsen, at mathematics and physics under Stegmann and Knoblauch. He completed the three years' course in two years, and won his PH.D. in 1850.

While still in the laboratory of Professor Knoblauch, Tyndall attracted the attention of scientific thinkers by his researches into the problems of magnetic repulsions called diamagnetism. He read a paper on the subject at the British Association in '51, and in '52, when only thirty-two years of age, was elected one of the members of the Royal Society.

He had returned from Germany to Queenwood College, and was working and teaching there, when he came out with a lecture at the Royal Institution in which he opposed Faraday's views on diamagnetism. With that magnanimity which seems to distinguish great masters of science, Faraday at once proposed young Tyndall as his colleague; and so, though the Universities of Toronto, Sydney, Dublin, and Edinburgh had rejected him, he became the colleague of Faraday at the Royal Institution for fourteen years, and after Faraday's death was appointed his successor as superintendent.

It was at the Royal Institution and in its laboratories that the chief part of Tyndall's work was done, and his name will always be linked there with the name of the man he most revered, Michael Faraday.

I don't need to tell of his books on heat and light and sound, and on the "Glaciers of the Alps," or his series

of essays on "Fragments of Science," which are destined to delight unborn generations.

It was in the late eighties that I met Tyndall in London. He was already over sixty years of age, and I was struck most by his alertness and brusqueness of manner. He seemed to be living in a high wind of activity and excitement. He was extraordinarily impulsive, without affectations of any sort, and perfectly sincere. He spoke with a slight Irish accent. He was of good height, perhaps five feet eight or nine inches, with a flowing beard already greying, and bright, quick grey eyes—the eyes, I always thought, of a man of action—till one day I found they could be reflective, even patient and sad. Though impulsive, he read life deeply.

His impulsiveness and idealism, the keynotes of his character, were never better displayed than in something that happened at the very outset of his career. In 1853 the Royal Society awarded him one of the Royal medals, the other recipient being Charles Darwin. One of the members of the Council, who wished to dispose of the medal differently, talked loudly about the injustice of giving a medal to a young Irish lad. As soon as the news of this reached Tyndall, he wrote a courteous note to the senior secretary, declining the honour.

Of course he was wrong, but, as Huxley said finely, it was "a good sort of mistake" to make.

At our very first meeting our acquaintance almost came to an end through something I said about Carlyle and his determination, as it seemed to me, not to understand poetry or artistry.

"He had more poetry in his little finger than you have in your whole body," was Tyndall's sharp retort; and

he jumped to his feet, as if he were prepared to fight on the matter.

I burst out laughing, and said: "Believe me, if I criticise him, it is not for lack of love. He was the first of my heroes, and still remains crowned to me."

"Haloed to me, too," he exclaimed, smiling, and peace was made. "I owe him more than I owe any man: he was one of the great souls."

The talk veered to Emerson, and he found that although I admired Emerson too, I put Carlyle higher as a larger natural force. Curiously enough, he agreed with me. I think it was Lowell or someone who had put Emerson above Carlyle as the rarer spirit, nearer the centre; but we were both delighted to find that, though we admired Emerson exceedingly, we both thought Carlyle the greater man. Carlyle seemed to me to have a richer physical constitution: Emerson was pure thought, almost too diaphanous to be human; and Tyndall agreed with this estimate. It was a bond of union between us, and almost at the end of his life in 1891, when over seventy years of age and in failing health, he promised to try and write for me his "Memories of Carlyle," which I would rather have published than any other paper I could have got in those years.

But it was not to be. In spite of the three months of each year that he spent at Bel Alp, Switzerland, he could not get strength for the work, and I have always regretted that unborn child of memory.

Tyndall, though excitable and explosive as powder, was at bottom both reasonable and of kindest generosity.

I am not capable of speaking of his scientific achievements, but he was far and away the best lecturer on

science I ever heard; I cannot believe that even Faraday was a greater exponent of new truths. He made himself master always of whatever he was talking about. Who will ever forget his lectures on light, which had won him the Rumford Medal?

One thing he told me about light in '89 or '90 will always live in my memory. It is to me one of those scientific truths which seem to alter all one's view of life and illumine, as with lightning flash, even the theological problems of evil and injustice.

After explaining how the blue air and the lovely colours of the sunset all come from excessively fine particles of organic or inorganic matter floating in the air, he went on to say that when he passed a beam of light through his experimental tube, which was perfectly free from motes, the ray of light itself became invisible. Pure light is not for human eyes. Light itself only gets its special quality from the resistance of innumerable atoms of matter. Later he used this curious fact, and the experiments that followed it, to disprove so-called spontaneous generation; among the floating motes were germs which Pasteur had found to be the cause of putrefaction. Sterilise water by boiling, said Tyndall, and there would be no life; expose it to the dust-laden air, and it would at once swarm with bacteria. It is life alone that generates life.

In the winter of '72 and '73 he visited America, and delivered lectures which afterwards appeared in his book on Light. The proceeds of the lectures, some \$30,000, he devoted to the furtherance of science, dividing the sum equally between Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Now, how should one place Tyndall? I don't know

enough either of chemistry or physics to attempt to put him in his proper niche in the Temple; but I should be very much surprised to learn that he was a great scientist. He always seemed to me too quick, too impulsive; a lightweight, a little superior to Proctor, but not endowed with the power of Huxley or the pre-eminent impartiality of Alfred Russel Wallace. A lightweight, but a very lovable and human man; so glad to praise whatever he saw was good; so eager to recognise all high qualities, even in his enemies.

In '94, just after his death, Thomas Huxley, his friend of forty years, wrote of him:

"Before one knew him well, it seemed possible to give an exhaustive definition of him in a string of epigrammatic antitheses, such as those in which the older historians delight to sum up the character of a king or leading statesman. Impulsive vehemence was associated with a singular power of self-control and a deep-seated reserve, not easily penetrated. Free-handed generosity lay side by side with much tenacity of insistence on any right, small or great; intense self-respect and a somewhat stern independence, with a sympathetic geniality of manner, especially towards children, with whom Tyndall was always a great favourite. Flights of imaginative rhetoric, which amused and sometimes amazed more phlegmatic people, proceeded from a singularly clear and hard-headed reasoner, over-scrupulous, if that may be, about keeping within the strictest limits of logical demonstration; and sincere to the core.

"A bright and even playful companion, Tyndall had little of that quick apprehension of the humorous side of things in general, and of one's self in particular, which is as oil to the waves of life. . . .



"To those privileged to become intimate with Tyndall, however, sketch and explanation will seem alike inadequate. These superficial characteristics disappeared from view as the powerful faculties and the high purposes of the mind, on the surface of which they played, revealed themselves. And to those who knew him best, the impression left by even these great qualities might well be less vivid than that left by the warmth of a tenderly affectionate nature."

No better portrait was ever sketched in so few words.

Tyndall married late in life—at 56, indeed—a Miss Hamilton. A little later he bought a plot of land high up on the Bel Alp, and there built himself a chalet where he fronted the sun and the great peaks across the deep cleft of the Rhone Valley. There he passed some months every summer till his death in '93.

What a fortunate, blessed life Science gives to its votaries. In this respect, Science has taken the place of religion. I remember Taine once talking about the contrast between religion and science, and taking Monte Casino as his text. He told us how the fine minds of the Middle Ages worked at their high tasks in that convent—a palace of solitude and thought, he called it. And he went on: "I wonder if Science will ever do as much for its votaries as Religion has done for hers? I wonder will there ever be a laic Monte Casino?"

Well, the Royal Institution in London has been a laic Monte Casino for some generations now. Fancy Tyndall getting the most congenial work and the fellowship of Faraday at 32 or 33! Most fortunate of mortals!

It is the artist, and especially the man of letters, who



is the real outcast. He may know more and feel more deeply than any Tyndall, but he will hardly win a medal of the Royal Society at 33, and he will certainly not be asked by the greatest writer of his time to take place beside him. Even if he is gifted, as Meredith was, with genius and looks and talent to an extraordinary degree, he will have to confess at 65 or 70, if he tells the truth, that he has had hardly a word of true appreciation written about him in all his life.

I remember telling Meredith, on our first meeting, that the love idyll between Lucy and Richard Feverel was one of the golden hours of my life. As I closed the page, I said to myself: "It is finer than the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespeare, and ever since it has put you with Shakespeare in my mind."

At once he stretched out his hand to me: "No one else has ever said so much in all these years."

One instance of Tyndall's singular generosity may find a place here. Speaking of his "Memories of Carlyle," I deplored the fact that my budget on *The Fortnightly Review*, though I always added my own salary to it, was wholly insufficient to pay such contributors as he was fair prices.

"Don't let that bother you," he said, smiling. "I shall be paid \$1000 by the *North American*, so I can afford to give the article to you."

Generosity and kindness the very heart of pugnacious, energetic John Tyndall.

## VI

### ERNST HAECKEL

"Knowledge is unattainable, in Man's State,  
We at best may only see some little part;  
After short purblind visions of Man's thought,  
Wisdom; our heritage, lies within our might,  
Time past, our fathers' was; this day that is,  
Is ours; the Future, we ourselves beget."

THESE lines are taken from a book with the secondary title of "The Riddle of the Universe," by Charles Doughty, an English poet of to-day, and as Haeckel's book with the same title is his most popular work, and has been translated into half a dozen languages and had an enormous sale, I thought the poetry might well introduce what I have to say about the thinker. For, strange to say, Haeckel thought he had solved the riddle, and his reputation as a prickly and aggressive disputant was due in great part to his profound belief in his own insight.

The publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" in 1859 changed the whole course of Haeckel's activities. He went to Sicily a German naturalist, and came back from Palermo a scientific observer and student with a mass of data; Darwin's work made him a thinker; showed him how to use the vast stock of scientific knowledge he had been accumulating. In his "Last Words of Evolution" he tells with simple directness the revolution which Darwin's work caused in him:

"Darwin's work appeared in 1859, and fell like a flash of lightning on the dark world of official biology. I had been engaged in a scientific expedition to Sicily and given myself to a thorough study of the graceful radiolarians, those wonderful microscopic marine animals that surpass all other organisms in the beauty and variety of their forms. The special study of this remarkable class of animals, of which I afterwards described more than 4000 species, after more than ten years of research, provided me with one of the solid foundation-stones of my Darwinian ideas. When I returned to Berlin in the spring of 1860, I knew nothing of Darwin's achievement. I merely heard from my friends that a remarkable work by a crazy Englishman had attracted great attention, and that it turned upside down all previous ideas as to the origin of species.

"I was deeply moved by the first reading of Darwin's book, and soon completely converted to his views. In Darwin's great and harmonious conception of Nature, and his convincing establishment of evolution, I had an answer to all the doubts that had beset me since the beginning of my biological studies."

Haeckel set to work at once in the light of the new knowledge, and five years later published his "Morphologie"; that formed the complement and chiefest corroboration of the Darwinian theory. It was all very well for Darwin to fix upon the simplest form of life and then construct an ascending ladder, each rung of which was more complex than the preceding one, and to tell us that this was how mankind came to the birth by gradual development from the tadpole to reason, and from undefined feelings and instinctive reactions to thoughts that wander through eternity. But Haeckel showed in the

"Morphologie" that the individual embryo is like a tadpole and the foetus in the womb passes through the chief metamorphoses already predicted of the race by Darwin. Never was there corroboration of a theory at once so unexpected and so complete. And in many other ways Haeckel showed himself to be rather the collaborator than the disciple of Darwin. Haeckel published his "History of Creation" before Darwin published "The Descent of Man," and Darwin, with the rare generosity which distinguished him, declared that he would never have written his "Descent" if he had known that Haeckel was at work on the same subject. The truth was though Darwin had elaborated his theory quite fifteen years before he published his "Origin of Species," yet he shrank for some time from applying his theory to man, fearing the hatred and malice of English puritanism. But, explain the matter how you will, the fact remains that Haeckel was the first boldly to apply the theory of evolution by natural selection to mankind.

That fact, and the biogenetic theory first discovered and demonstrated by Haeckel in the "Morphologie," makes him the peer of the great Englishman. Haeckel, too, was the first to popularise the theory by lecturing on the new biology. In bare justice, one must admit that he never feared to push his thought to the furthest.

He was a controversialist by nature, and waged unsparing, if only verbal, war on whosoever differed with him. He took Virchow to task for a careless phrase, and, indeed, at one time or other crossed swords with all the ablest thinkers of the time.

Here is a passage which reveals a great deal of the man:

"I do not belong," says Haeckel boldly, "to the

amiable group of 'men of compromise.' I am in the habit of giving candid and straightforward expression to the convictions which half a century of serious and laborious study has led me to form. If I seem to you an iconoclast, a fighter, I pray you to remember that the victory of pure reason over current superstition will not be achieved without a tremendous struggle."

The truth is that Haeckel delighted in controversy, and was always too combative to be a disinterested lover of science.

#### HAECKEL AND THE NEW GOSPEL

When I was a student in Munich about '79 or '80, I took up the "Morphologie" by chance, and simply devoured the biogenetic theory, while leaving untouched all the scientific paraphernalia.

Without help, I had already come to the conclusion that the individual man had stored up in himself all the chief stages of feeling and thought which the race had passed through in countless generations. Time and again, when reading this or that philosopher, I had closed the book, saying to myself, "You had these very thoughts as a cowboy on the Trail." And, more than once, I was able to guess what speculation would come next in the history of metaphysics. From this fact, I had drawn conclusions that outran Haeckel's theory.

The complete agnosticism of my youth had begun to change into a sort of Pantheism. As force and matter are indestructible, I saw that spirit was everlasting, and the spirit of man one and universal.

A new vision and a new reward came to me from this understanding. In measure as you grow, I said to my-

self, so your ideas and feelings will become a forecast of the future of the race, and just as you embody in yourself to-day the chief experiences of the long-forgotten past, so you will be able from your own growth to divine what is to come thousands of years after your death.

This comparative immortality filled me with new hope and unexpected exultation. I felt that it lay with me and in my power to become a sort of beacon for generations of men yet to be born; if I chasten myself, if I live to the highest in me, if I seize every opportunity of extending my knowledge and thought, if I school myself to feel the joy and suffering of others as deeply as my own, I too may yet become one of the sacred guides and, in spite of all insufficiency, help to steer humanity across the unpath'd waters to the undreamed-of shores. Swinburne's great hymn to the Earth-mother took on a new significance to me:

"But what dost thou now  
Looking Godward to cry  
'I am I, Thou art Thou,  
I am low, Thou art high,'  
I am Thou whom Thou seekest to find,  
Find Thou but thyself, Thou art I.

"I the seed that is sown  
And the plough-cloven clod  
And the plough-share drawn thorough  
The germ and the sod.  
The seed and the sower, the deed and the doer,  
The dust which is God."

No wonder I wanted to meet Haeckel, and in my first long vacation I made a pilgrimage to Jena.



## THE MEETING WITH HAECKEL

I had written to Haeckel, telling him I was an Irish-American student who wished to see and thank him for his "epoch-making addition" to "Darwinismus." He replied, saying he would be glad to see me and to have a talk, and a talk we had that lasted ever so many hours. He was very affable, ingenuously eager to know what was thought of him in America; "did they regard him as a mere pupil of Darwin? or as a worker beside him in the same field?" I told him the truth, that his embryological knowledge and biogenetic discovery had given him, with Alfred Russel Wallace, rank as an independent thinker among the followers of Darwin.

Reassured in this respect, he let himself go, and gave me a sketch of his monistic philosophy, in which he appeared much more interested than in his scientific discoveries. In the course of this lecture, he spoke with passionate contempt of all who disagreed with, or even sought to modify, his materialistic view. Virchow even, who was a teacher of mine at Berlin, came under the whip for a mere phrase; but I must admit that, when I asked him about Virchow's cell-theory, he admitted his high worth as an independent observer and spoke of him as a fellow-student.

The man was eminently fair-minded, broad-minded even; but he was of his time and thought that the demolition of the superstitions and spiritual guesses of the past was much more important than it in reality was. Like Huxley, he was an iconoclast and expositor of the new biology, rather than an original thinker; and laid stress rather on the ancillary benefits of the new thought than on its hidden spirit content.

When I ventured to extend his creed and show the inferences to be drawn from it and its implications as regards the future, and consequent influence on man's conduct and hope, he listened, it is true, but with courteous, patient inattention. Though in the prime of life, his blue eyes as bright at 45 or 46 as they had been twenty years earlier, his development seemed to be arrested. He talked of the great book he had in mind (which afterwards appeared as "The Riddle of the Universe"), and spoke as if he would solve all problems in it, satisfy all doubts, never dreaming that he had got on a side-track and was neglecting the inspiring vision to be drawn from his own discovery. He didn't seem to realise that the new knowledge brought new questionings of sense and outward things, and that the riddle of man's existence was never to be answered. An English poet of our time, whom I have quoted at the beginning of this article, knew better. He wrote:

"The sum of all is; there be many paths  
Of human goodness, and the blameless life;  
Wherein a man may walk towards the Gods,  
Till some be found new aspect of Man's mind.  
Until a candle light exceed the sun;  
Can none read Riddle of the Universe,  
It passeth Man's understanding; and shall pass."

It is well for us, no doubt, that we cannot as yet, at any rate, grasp the whole and comprehend the ultimate purpose.

#### ONE INCIDENT

Some incidents of our talk stuck in my mind. Haeckel mentioned the English translator of his "Morphologie"

with great respect, Mr. Ray Lankester. I knew nothing of him; but I could not help telling Haeckel that the translation was disgracefully bad. "To judge by that," I said, "Ray Lankester knows little English and less German."

"You surprise me," Haeckel exclaimed, reprovingly. "I've been assured by English friends that it was well done and Ray Lankester is a man of very considerable scientific attainments."

I could only stick to my guns and, at the same time, modify the disagreeable impression by expatiating on the incredible difficulties of translation and so forth. Some fifteen or twenty years later, I got to know Ray Lankester in London, and had from him the solution of that riddle, at least.

I told him of Haeckel's touching belief in the excellence of his translation, and asked him without more ado how he came to put his name to such 'prentice work. It was during a dinner at the Athenæum Club, I remember, and the big man (all the three or four Lankester brothers were big men) burst into a peal of laughter.

"I couldn't possibly afford the time," he said, "and so I wrote to Haeckel, telling him at the same time I'd supervise it if he wished. He wrote effusively, and I happened to know a girl at the time who wanted work and had some understanding of German, and so I passed it on to her. The price offered was not enough even for a beginner, and naturally I could give but little time to such ungrateful labour. I looked over a few pages, and thought it fairly done. Haeckel's German is anything but good; if I remember rightly, he coins neologisms by the score, but I thought one could understand the gist of it in its English dress. I'm sorry if it's rotten, but

all translators are traitors—you know the Italian—*traduttore-traditore*.”

There is a good deal of truth in what Ray Lankester said; Haeckel's German is appalling to anyone with a sense of style, and it would have taken years for a master to turn it into acceptable English. Still—I was a little indignant with Mr. now Sir Ray Lankester, not realising even then how badly most of the world's work is done.

I came away from my visit to Haeckel with high appreciation of the man's ingenuous honesty and kindness; a real student and scholar, his unremitting industry as a youth had enabled him to complete Darwin's work and to bracket his name for ever with that of the great Englishman. As a populariser, too, of the new knowledge, he did most useful work, and as an iconoclast cleared the ground for the new Temple of Science. But, comparing him with Russel Wallace, or even with Thomas Huxley, he seemed to me of smaller stature, though his discovery placed him on a loftier pedestal. I never wrote to him after leaving, because he told me his correspondence had become enormous; he spoke of answering thousands of letters; and I could see no object in wasting his time or my own. In 1914 Haeckel celebrated his 80th birthday, and has since gone to his long home, unwitting of the misfortunes that have befallen his fatherland. In this, at least, he was fortunate.

The great discovery of Haeckel is an excellent example of what international competition and work may produce of benefit to humanity. Darwin's work fell on receptive ears, not in England, but in Germany; and Haeckel added as much to the Darwinian theory as he received from it. All the nations of Christendom are children of the household of God.

## VII

### GRANT ALLEN

ONE Sunday morning, a good many years ago now, I remember seeing a small party of enthusiasts marching into the northern corner of Hyde Park, where they intended to speechify at great length. They carried banners with the inscription "The peace-loving Atheists." The "peace-loving," I imagine, was deprecatory—an attempt to ward off or disarm any appeal to force on the part of the ribald Christian majority!

After knowing Grant Allen, I always thought of him as the typical peace-loving atheist. He could be described with more "ists" than anyone else I ever saw. He was an atheist and pacifist and socialist, a botanist and zoologist and optimist, a chemist and physicist, a scientist of scientists, a monist, meliorist and hedonist, and God knows what "ist" besides. There was no "ism" on earth which he wouldn't defend with clear-eyed impartial pertinacity save one; rationalism was his religion, but patriotism really annoyed him.

Our lives happened to be somewhat closely interwoven. He taught literature at Brighton College in the seventies, and I followed him a little later. Some of the older boys were enthusiastic about him, and so when I met him in 1887, in the South of France, I was prepared to like him, and we became friends almost at first sight.

In person he was rather tall and thin, with a Scotch

face, long and bony, sandy hair and light blue eyes, not ill-looking nor yet handsome, with an air of clean alertness and vivacity about him. He was a good walker, and took at least as much exercise as his loose-knit frame would stand. He owed his consistent good health rather to his moderation in eating and drinking and his love of the open air, than to any peculiar vigour of constitution. Indeed, all along I suspected a certain physical weakness in him; after a long walk once, up a mountain, I called on him to run to the bottom, and found that he was exhausted. No one ever used a comparatively weak frame more carefully or got more out of his inheritance—physical or psychic—than Grant Allen.

To me he was a charming companion; he knew all about flowers and plants and trees; knew insects, too, and such small deer; while every winged songster was familiar to him. A walk with him was an education in botany and zoology, and he had no whimsies or quirks; he was always reasonable, good-tempered, vivacious, bright, and interested in every human interest. To my astonishment, he knew a good deal about painting and sculpture and architecture; he was certainly the best-informed all-round man I have ever had the good fortune to meet. His knowledge was so encyclopædic that it became the custom among his friends to say of some doubtful point: "Let's look it up in Grant."

He was also astonishingly articulate; a super-journalist; he wrote excellent prose, and could turn you out a first-rate article on almost any subject from the growth of the idea of God to the habits of the caterpillar, at a moment's notice, and without perceptible exertion. I used to say his typewriter disturbed no one,



for it went in one long even click. Yet he always suffered from a rigid economy in living; no one ever heard him ask a favour; but when Newnes, the owner of the *Strand Magazine*, offered one thousand pounds (or five thousand dollars) for the best short story, and Grant Allen won it, his exultation showed me how the limited expenditure had galled him. "What's Bred in the Bone" was really, as a story, an astounding *tour-de-force*.

Grant was rarely enthusiastic about any man's work, least of all about his own, but high-minded and free from trace of malice or envy. He praised my early stories warmly, sent them to Meredith and others, and drew their commendation before I knew that he himself wrote short stories with consummate mastery. When he sent me "The Rev. John Creedy," or "Gone Fantee" as it should have been christened, I was simply amazed.

And when I became enthusiastic, as my nature is, and praised it as among the great short stories of the world, he sent me some poems which were even more of a surprise to me. The volume was called modestly: *The Lower Slopes: Reminiscences of Excursions round the base of Helicon, undertaken for the most part in early manhood*; a slim booklet of undoubted achievement. I don't mean to say that Grant Allen was a great poet; but certain of his verses have stuck in my memory these thirty years or more, and that's a pretty good proof of their value. Here, for instance, is a verse anyone, even Browning, might be proud to have signed:

"We yearn for brotherhood with lake and mountain,  
Our conscious soul seeks conscious sympathy,  
Nymphs in the coppice, Naiads in the fountain,  
Gods on the craggy height and roaring sea.

We find but soulless sequences of matter,  
Fact linked to fact by adamantine rods,  
Eternal bonds of former sense and latter,  
Dead laws for living gods."

It is impossible to paint any faithful portrait of Grant Allen without stating frankly his outspokenness on the sex question. His friends knew that he was a free-lover as he was a free-thinker from the beginning; he made no bones about it, but confessed it, in and out of season, with startling precision. Indeed, he once summed his belief up in a verse which is the only one I ever heard him quote with gusto:

"I hold that heart full poor that owns its boast  
To throb in time with but one throbbing breast.  
Who numbers many friends, loves friendship most;  
Who numbers many loves, loves each love best."

In this, as in all other matters, he was imperturbably reasonable; so long as there were no children, he could not see that promiscuity hurt anybody; and, if there were children, honest men would provide for their upbringing, and therewith the matter ended. He wrote "The Woman Who Did" with absolute delight and a convincing sincerity; but I don't think that, rationalist as he was, he had gauged the storm of reprobation it called forth or his subsequent loss of popularity. Born and bred in Canada, he could not imagine that frankness of speech on sex-matters was even more detestable to the English than loose living. Accustomed to regard all questions from the standpoint of reason, he could not foresee the idiotic prejudice and wild hatreds of the ordinary tongue-tied citizen, but he forgave them, or rather

understood at once, and showed no trace of bitterness or malice.

Towards the end he came into easier circumstances, and before he dropped anchor was well within the haven.

He was singularly blessed in a loving, charming wife, who looked on his *fredaines* as a mother might. Mrs. Grant Allen never appeared to mind his outspoken infidelities, and it seemed to me probable that his "pretty follies" were often of thought, and not of deed.

As a friend he was in the first class—frank, truthful, kindly, generous to a fault, always ready to give more than he asked—a singularly engaging companion by width of sympathy and knowledge, and a rare critic, who knew the best in three or four arts, and was qualified to appreciate almost every degree of excellence. I cannot close this sketch without yielding to the temptation to quote here an early criticism of one of my first Western stories. When published in *The Fortnightly Review*, about 1889 or 1890, I believe, the "Modern Idyll" was attacked ferociously in the press and notably by a certain Reverend Newman Hall, and even *The Spectator*, supposed to be a Liberal Weekly, joined in the hue and cry with apostolic fervour, though I had been a contributor to its columns for years. Under these circumstances, Grant Allen came to the rescue with an article, part of which I copy herewith, as it shows his human kindliness and generosity:

"A signal astronomical phenomenon is observable in our literary skies this month:—Mr. Frank Harris's "Modern Idyll" in the June *Fortnightly*. What a wonderful story! How clever, how acute, how subtle, how soul-searching! There will be much questioning of spirit over this small episode of Far Western life, of course,

for Mr. Harris has proceeded to tell his tale exactly as if Mrs. Grundy weren't listening at the keyhole. . . . Mr. Harris's picture is finished and masterly in a very high degree. It betrays dramatic power of the first order, and an unusual command of clear and nervous and pictorial English. The Editor of the *Fortnightly* was well known, of old, to his friends, as one of the cleverest and most spell-binding *raconteurs* in London. But how much of the spell was due to a voice of great histrionic capacity and a most lively delivery, one hardly knew beforehand. Mr. Harris held one with his glittering eye, and thrilled one with his emotional tones, quick transitions, apt and telling pauses. Would the stories bear equally well setting down in print? That was the question. The current number of the *Fortnightly* answers it amply. Here is a writer who knows *au fond* the anatomy of the human heart; nay, more, who can serve it up for us, all throbbing and palpitating. There are more courses to come, I believe, if it be not an indiscretion to say so. The wiser public will be on the lookout for them."

It was not till Grant Allen had passed out of life that I realised my loss. Time and again, when stung to revolt by some injustice, I wanted his opinion, his view of the matter, and the best way of righting the wrong. He was both wise and understanding, and quick as any knight-errant to fight for the under-dog. At length I have found the true word, I think, for this modern of the moderns: he was not only a scientist and thinker and artist in words, but at heart a "knight-errant," and lovable for his superlative chivalry.

## VIII

### LEONARD MERRICK

SOME fifteen years ago or more I began to notice in this periodical and that short stories by Leonard Merrick. The tales were all marked by a neatness of architecture, an ease of narration, a calculated crescendo of effect, and often a sharp ironic ending that showed the master-craftsman. I began to ask about the author: who was Leonard Merrick? Where did he live?

I could find out little or nothing of any importance; my curiosity was quickened; then I read a book of his which made a deep impression on me—"The Quaint Companions." It is the story of a negro singer who marries a white woman, and of their coloured child, who becomes a writer of talent. It is a pathetic exposure of the horrors of race-ostracism.

"Here is the man himself," I cried; "at length Merrick is doing his best, giving us his true measure. But why did he choose this story of a pariah? Had he any personal reason, any personal disability?"

I wrote to his publishers, and was told that Merrick was living in Versailles. A week or two later I drove out to Versailles one evening, and after a long, tedious hunt found Merrick. He introduced me to his wife.

Merrick is a small, handsome man, slight but wiry and healthy, with melancholy, dark brooding eyes, long straight nose, and large black moustache; he must be fifty or thereabouts to-day. It is hard to make the

reader see him, because he has no marked peculiarities.

I should not have known he was a Jew had he not told me; the moment he told me, I understood the pathos of "The Quaint Companions."

Merrick's manner was quiet, courteous, without affectation of any sort; his dress subdued and as conventional as his greeting; and yet the very absence of self-consciousness or pretence, the unaffected simplicity of the man, made a very agreeable impression on me. I liked Merrick at first sight, and hoped he would like me.

His wife, too, seemed to me charming; dark-eyed and clever; I was not surprised to hear that she was writing a play—but that's another story.

Merrick admitted quite simply that he made very little by his pen. Later he told me that he did not believe "any man in London had found it more difficult to keep body and soul together by his pen than he had found it during at least twenty years."

He lived in France, he said, because living there was cheaper than in England, and yet he had learned very little French. He did not attempt to hide his ignorance or make a virtue of it. He blamed himself for his negligent laziness. He would not be put upon a pedestal; he had no thought of guiding or steering humanity. He liked to write stories: "What else could I do?" he asked simply; and now that he was better paid for his work, he was fairly content; he hoped to get even a higher price as he went on.

I soon found out that he had a much larger fund of experiences to draw on than most writers. Something I said about South Africa elicited a remark from him which showed me that he knew South Africa well. I



began questioning him about his early life. He was born in London and destined for the Bar, I found; but his father lost a great part of his fortune, and Merrick had to face life early. He had the adventurous spirit. At the age of eighteen he went to South Africa, and got a job in Kimberley superintending the labours of the Kaffirs in the diamond mines; later he obtained a slightly better position. Some of his stories, like "The Laurels and the Lady," show how he used these experiences.

He worked in a solicitor's office in Kimberley for nearly two years, and in his leisure began to write. Finally, at twenty-one, he returned to England with the idea of writing or of going on the stage.

One of his earliest novels, "The Position of Peggy," is, to a certain extent, autobiographical. The hero, Christopher Tatham, has a rich father who dies suddenly, leaving him almost penniless. Christopher goes on the stage. His weak struggles throw light on the author's character. Most of Merrick's personages are mere puppets of Fortune. A little overpowered by the drive of life and press of circumstances, Merrick is inclined to attribute too much weight to surroundings and too little to individual initiative. Life seems to have frightened him.

He complained to me once that he could not write stories to order; he had to wait till an idea came. He appeared rather to underrate the value and importance of his tales, and when I praised one of them, "Little Flower of the Wood," warmly, he smiled:

"I wish I could think it as good as all that," he said deprecatingly, and then showed an uncommon insight: "Surely each generation will do such work as that; it's

only the extraordinary that has really a chance of surviving." *Only the extraordinary*; that's the heart of truth as Goethe had seen a century before.

In my time I have met all sorts of artists and men of letters; politicians, too; and officers of the army and navy. I have never met anyone who had come out of the ruck and yet remained so unaffectedly modest as Leonard Merrick; never anyone who made such small claims on public attention and interest.

He seemed to shrink from praise as eagerly as other writers are inclined to demand it. The charm in him was that he was eager to give praise.

Either on that first visit or a little later I told him of Richard Middleton and his sad suicide, which had just taken place, and found, a little to my surprise, that he did not know Middleton's poetry or stories. I sent him some, and he praised them enthusiastically, writing to me in this strain:

"I have read as far as the end of 'The Story of a Book.' Has anyone else written a ghost story in that key? To me it is quite new, and I fancy that no one but a writer of genius would have thought of it for a ghost story. I am sure that no one but a consummate artist could have sustained it so wonderfully. 'A Romance of Youth' and 'The New Boy' are the greatest expression of childhood that I have ever read. I think they're perfect—they have everything. I wish I had known him; *it is hurting me as if I had known him to think of the way he died.* . . . I am feeling very tolerant towards the public to-day; I had never read Richard Middleton, and I'm not the man to throw stones at anybody." (The italics are mine.)

My first visit to Merrick was followed by a spate of

letters, as much from my side as from his. In one of these I asked him to write for a paper I was editing. He replied:

"I suffer from the fact that I ought never to have been an author at all—lacking a private income—and that my output is so painfully small that I am ashamed to confess it. I know it sounds like a pose, but I can't write a short story, even very badly, until I get hold of an idea that I like. Sometimes I have to wait two months for an idea, though a commission is staring at me from the table. It is only because Watt \* always arranges with the English editor to wait for publication in America, where I am recently getting a great deal more, that I am able to make bread and cheese."

In another letter I asked him some questions so that I might do a pen-portrait of him, and he answered in this way:

"I'll try to answer your questions, but—if it doesn't sound a pose again—(pray believe that I have no affectations; it is one of my two virtues!)—I have politely declined to supply copy of this kind more than once. Not from modesty, oh no! because I found it so difficult to find anything to say.

"I. My favourite authors, I'm not sure about; but the three novels that have made the most lasting impression on me are 'Richard Feverel,' George Moore's 'A Mummer's Wife,' and Mallock's 'A Romance of the Nineteenth Century.' I'm sorry not to be able to cite any French works, but, although the American reviewers are complimenting me on my 'attentive study' of French literature—'some of my earlier stuff being obviously modelled upon certain French masters'—my

\* His literary agent.

knowledge of French literature and of the French language is discomfitingly slight and extremely recent.

"II. I like verse better than prose—when I like it at all, but I can't stick it in large quantities. I like fragments better than the acclaimed masterpieces. (And I like music better than verse.) I like Browning's 'Any Wife to Any Husband' better than any of his long poems, and—I'm sorry to shock you—I like his wife's 'Aurora Leigh' better than Browning as a whole. . . . You must not take me to mean that I would give the 'whole' of Browning's work for one poem of his wife's! I mean that my pleasure in 'Aurora Leigh,' when I read it, had been sustained throughout, but that my (greater) pleasure in Browning was *not continuous*."

I quote this criticism because it is first-rate. Poetry is not meant to be read in large quantities; a poem, to speak flippantly, should be "Sarah Jane's top note," a deep or high emotion clothing itself inevitably in music—Heine's lyrics, or Goethe's, or Shakespeare's. I do not esteem "Aurora Leigh" as highly as Merrick; but I certainly found it easier to read than "The Ring and the Book."

Merrick's criticism is excellent by dint of sincerity. There is no more sincere writer; he is without pose or pretence of any kind. I asked him one day what he thought of "Love's Pilgrimage," by Upton Sinclair, which had just appeared. I admire "The Jungle" infinitely, and had said so, but I did not like the later book. Merrick replied:

"I'd rather not say anything about 'Love's Pilgrimage,' of Upton Sinclair. I told *you* I didn't like it when you asked me point-blank, but I am not a professional critic—I don't pretend I'm a critic at all—and I don't

think it's cricket for a mere novelist to say publicly that he dislikes another man's novel."

Merrick shrinks from doing anything which could make another writer's career more difficult.

I pressed Merrick to write another "Quaint Companions," dealing this time with Jews and the pathos of their disabilities, but he would not.

"I am not keen," he wrote, "on starting another novel—at all events yet awhile. A novel takes me an eternity to write. . . . I seldom manage to sell serial rights, and the publisher's statement always concludes 'Amount overpaid'—I am going to stick to short stories: they pay better, and I find them much more fascinating too. One can attempt all sorts of experiments in form with the short story, and one never need pad by so much as a syllable. You can't say that about a novel? I don't believe there was ever a novel written that wasn't padded—it doesn't require 60,000 words to tell any story adequately, and after one has been writing contes (forgive this obvious attempt to avoid tautology!) for some years on end, it is even more difficult to pad out chapters than it was before."

This view, too, of stories, I agree with.

As our friendship deepened, I found Merrick a very interesting and pleasant personality. The facetting of his intelligence became clear to me in his criticism, and most clearly perhaps in his detached judgments of the English and their characteristics. Again and again in "The Quaint Companions" he shows his aloofness from the English point of view; the bullying in English schools disgusts him. The negro father talks to his writer son like this:

"Truth? Who the devil wants truth?" replied the



nigger. "People hate the truth, especially English people; there's nothing they detest so much. . . . If you want to do lyrics, you must write about love, or the valour of Englishmen. Nothing else is any use."

And again in his own person Merrick exposes another English shortcoming:

"The tuition—as in every English art school—tended to crush the instinctive feeling of the students." And finally: "I can't realise England at large ever ranking any writer as high as—well, as high as lots of things. I think the average Englishman's view of the career of a poet is that it is silly and unmanly. Even a novelist is respected more (or not smiled at so much) and the 'novel-reading young lady' is still a term of contempt. I think, myself, the only art the English public take at all seriously is painting, because they have always heard of huge sums of money being paid for pictures and because painters are made R.A's." (Royal Academicians.)

I think it was from Leonard Merrick that I first learned to realise how terrible it was to some people to feel themselves under a ban because of some accident of colour or race which they could not control or alter. I could never see why a man should care what race he came from or what country. But there was a shyness, a shrinking in Merrick, coupled with an eagerness to say: "I am a Jew," which showed wounded feeling and a certain subdued resentment.

From the point of view of the artist, however, Merrick has been lucky just where he thinks himself unfortunate. His being born a Jew gave him the detachment from English insularity which degrades much of the work of a man like Kipling. It was also a happy chance that drove him to South Africa in his teens and forced him



to earn his living as best he could in the mining camp of Kimberley. Poverty teaches us real life, and the sting of poverty in Merrick's case was intensified by the sense that he was an outsider and pariah. He thus reached the fairness of vision and command of pathos one finds everywhere in his writings. Bohemia became his native country, and his best stories deal with life in that fascinating and picturesque land. One of his best short stories, in my opinion, is "The Little Flower of the Wood." The story is told by Janiaud, an old absinthe drinker, who sips his glass of green poison and dreamily tells the tale of the shabby little restaurant known as the Loup Blanc and its surprising prosperity. Years before, the restaurant had been on the verge of failure. But one night the reigning dancer of the moment, known as "The Little Flower of the Wood," took it into her pretty head to forsake the glittering restaurants of the boulevards and the Bois, and dine at the Loup Blanc. She went accompanied by a train of admirers, fell in love with the place, and soon made the restaurant popular.

Two years pass. Little Flower of the Wood is no longer the reigning queen. Her health is shattered, her purse depleted, the warm sun of the Riviera even can do no more for her. She returns to Paris to die. One night she finds her way up the hill of Montmartre to the Loup Blanc. No one recognises in the broken and shabbily dressed woman at a table in the shadow, the Parisian stage idol of other days. She cannot afford to pay for the supper prescribed by the rules of the house, and the waiters are about to eject her when she tells the proprietor who she is, and he gallantly invites her to stay as his guest. The final touch is characteristic. One of the listeners asks where Little Flower of the Wood is living.

The poet shrugged his shoulders. "Is there no satisfying you? You asked me for the history of the Loup Blanc; and there are things that even I do not know; however, I have done my best. I cannot say where the lady is living, but I can tell you where she was born." He pointed, with a drunken laugh, to his glass: "There!"

This is a superb short story, admirably told; the pathos is saved from being almost too painful by the doubt cast upon the truth of the tale in the last words.

Another short story of Merrick's, I am not likely to forget is "The Bishop's Comedy," were it only for the fact that the Bishop is so admirably realised in half a dozen sentences:

"He never said anything noteworthy, but he voiced the sentiments of the unthinking in stately language. This made him generally admired. It is not to be inferred that he was insincere—he had been granted a popular mind; he shared with the majority a strong aversion from disagreeable truths. His wisest reflections were bounded by the word 'Unpleasant,' and every truth that was unpleasant was to the Bishop of Westborough 'one of those things that are better left undiscussed.' He had a warm affection for this phrase, which occurred in all his articles for the cultured reviews. It was a phrase that suggested much earnestness of thought, while it spared him the exertion of thinking at all."

The story itself is too far-fetched to be credible, but in the same volume there are two more short stories, "A Very Good Thing for the Girl" and "The Woman Who Wished to Die," that are really interesting without being masterpieces.

## MERRICK'S POPULARITY

Now, everyone seems to believe that Merrick is a great master. Most of the better-known English writers have indeed conspired, so to speak, to assert it. A uniform edition of Merrick is being got out by Stoddard & Houghton. Barrie has written an introduction to "Conrad in Quest of His Youth." Sir W. Robertson Nicoll has written another to "When Love Flies Out o' the Window"; Wells prefaces "The Quaint Companions"; Locke, "The Man Who Understands Women"; and W. D. Howells, "The Actor-Manager." Chesterton, too, and Maurice Hewlett, Pinero and Granville Barker, have all been roped in. If Merrick suffered long from unmerited neglect, it must now be admitted that his peers have done their best to atone for the adder ears of the public. Mr. Howells asked indignantly:

"Why is not this masterly novelist a master universally recognised and accepted?" And Sir W. Robertson Nicoll declared: "Leonard Merrick will come to his own at last and be recognised for what he is—the greatest master of narrative now living!"

No one surely could want more than this. W. D. Howells was supposed to know a master when he met him, and Sir W. Robertson Nicoll ought to have known what good narrative is, for he has eulogised poor, second-rate narrative for at least two generations.

The pompous extravagances of the Nicolls should not mislead one, or, worse still, drive one into opposition. To talk about "the greatest master of narrative now living," frees comparison with Sudermann and Tchekov, Gorki and Artzibatchef, with Anatole France and

Maeterlinck, with D'Annunzio and Galdos, to say nothing of Wells and Hewlett. It damages Merrick to be eulogised in this way, and he would be among the first to deplore the vapid praise of titled mediocrity.

Where, then, is Merrick's true place in letters? He has been compared to O. Henry, and O. Henry is perhaps the nearest to him both in gifts and in limitations, for both are essentially short story writers. He seems to me as good a writer as O. Henry, but he has not felt so deeply; the experiences of life have not affected him so profoundly. O. Henry's finest stories are better than Merrick's. O. Henry, I think, is near the first rank; his best work is as good as Kipling at his best or as Wells at his best.

One passage I always find curiously characteristic of Merrick. It occurs in the short story, "The Fatal Florozonde," and is ascribed to the poet de Fronsac, who here stands, I am sure, for Merrick himself:

"There are three kinds of men," explained the poet. "Class A. are the men to whom women inevitably surrender. Class B. consists of those whom they trust by instinct and confide in on the second day; these men acquire an extensive knowledge of the sex—but they always fall short of winning the women for themselves. Class C., women think of merely as the others—they do not count."

This is soul-revealing, I cannot but think. Men who are timid and self-doubters, for one reason or another, usually believe that your bold, good-looking Bel Ami can win any woman he chooses; "women inevitably surrender" to him. But the bold Greathearts know that this is not true, that there are women whom their very self-assurance repels, women whom they can never take

by assault. So plain women are apt to believe that the pretty girl can win any man she sets her cap at; but your pretty girl knows better; knows that the very man she most wanted never surrendered to her challenge. Love is much more complex than Merrick imagines, and Don Juan himself learnt by failure more than once in life. Class B., too, and Class C. are all too absolute; in fine, no one seeks to group men in their relations with the other sex who knows much about the matter. The mere effort shows as clearly as possible that Merrick is what the French would call "a timid man," one whom life has daunted or overpowered, and this fact holds the secret of his real command of pathos and intense creative sympathy with the outcasts and failures of our civilisation.

I am glad to think that Merrick's writings are now bringing him in a fair income—enough, at any rate, to satisfy his wants. Poverty has not injured him, and I am certain that money will never render him hard or vainglorious or proud. He has no deep belief in progress, sees no evidence of a moral purpose in life; yet he has much kindness in him, and great charm of affectionate companionship.

## IX

### HERBERT TRENCH

EMERSON wrote once that the Englishman's lot is still the best in the world.

Taken by and large, as the sailor says, this is no longer true; for the vast majority of people everywhere are working people; and the lot of the manual labourer in America is certainly better than it is anywhere else in the world. It is not nearly as good as it should be, but it is better than anywhere else; not because the American capitalist and organiser of labour has more ability than any other capitalist or organiser of labour; on the contrary, I think it might easily be proved that he has shown less intelligence than the English or German organiser of labour; but because he is a member of a community that is by far the richest in the world. No other country can compare with America in natural advantages. Therefore, neither the Captains of Industry nor the "hands" are forced to desperate exertion.

But the lot of the English governing class is still the best in the world; even their parasites and hangers-on, so to speak, are better off than they are anywhere else, provided always they are properly tamed; or perhaps cultured is the better word.

Herbert Trench belonged to the upper middle-class of Britain. He was born in the village of Midleton, some twelve miles from Youghal, Ireland, in a country house called "Avoncove"; a big, long, low dwelling house,



belonging to his maternal grandfather, who also owned a big house in Youghal (once the home of the Earls of Cork) called "The College."

Herbert Trench's earliest recollections were of being driven to picnics on the marches of the sea coast near Midleton, and playing about in the woods or on the strand.

Trench went first to school at Midleton, but when twelve years of age was taken to London, where his father lived. He was soon packed off to the big English public school of Haileybury, in Hertfordshire. There he went in for games; played football with great vigour, and was prouder of getting into the school Fifteen than of becoming the head of the Modern Side and taking a lot of prizes.

He was looked upon as a very successful boy; but was full, he says, of self-criticism and dissatisfaction—a statement curiously worth noting.

"My best moments," he asserts, "were passed lying in the woods of the adjoining heath, reading old poetry of 'Ronsard' and *La Morte D'Arthur*, and the big romances of Victor Hugo and George Elliot. Among the English poets, Keats, Milton, and Shakespeare were my favourites in youth; but later in life, Matthew Arnold and Housman."

After Haileybury, Trench went to Oxford with scholarships. The most vivid remembrance of his early twenties was of a long journey he made to Italy one August, where he was asked to spend the summer in Shelley's villa on the shores of the bay of Alerici. The villa abutted on the sea, its arcaded pillars standing so close over the water that the wave-lights flickered on the ceiling of the sitting-room. The woods of the little bay, the olive gar-

dens of the mountain slopes, and the rocky islets scented with pines were ineffaceably mingled in Trench's memory with the friendships he made among his companions.

Harry Huntington, at whose invitation he had travelled out to Italy, died shortly afterwards. His was a great character, Trench declares, and "a presence of perfect beauty."

Trench finished his Oxford life by becoming a Fellow of All Souls' College, and he was proud to record the fact that Lord Curzon, afterwards Viceroy of India, and Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury were honorary Fellows, and used to come and breakfast with the Fellows; and now and then young Trench would go and visit Mr. Gladstone at Dollis Hill, near London.

"Once I went up the Nile," he wrote, "for three months on a 'Dahabiah,' and travelled with friends in Syria. But these were only long vacation ramblings, as I had no private means to speak of.

"When on a lecturing tour in Cornwall, I met my wife, Lilian Isabelle Fox, niece of Caroline Fox, of Pengerick, whose 'Memoirs' are well known.

"In 1891 I became examiner at the Board of Education, and led the ordinary life of an Administrator of Grants at Whitehall for seventeen years."

While on the Board of Education, Trench wrote and published "Deirdre Wedded" and other poems. In 1907 he published a new volume of poems, including "Apollo and the Seaman," which was well reviewed. In 1908 he retired at his own request, on a full pension, in order to follow literature.

It would be hard to imagine any better life for a poet, any happier life than this; money cares never seem to have troubled him, and he was not rich enough to be

especially tempted. Let me try to realise him for my readers.

When I first met him, Trench was perhaps forty years of age; about five feet eleven in height, and well-made; slight rather than stout, in hard athletic condition. His face (which I had hoped to reproduce here) was extraordinarily attractive; his manners excellent; an all-round Englishman with a presence, if I may use words such as he affected, of singular distinction; richly endowed, too, in the poetic way, with a fine feeling for words and very considerable singing faculty. One verse will show his superb qualities:

"I heard them calling in the streets  
That the ship I serve upon—  
The great ship Immortality—  
Was gone down, like the sun. . . ."

My interest in Herbert Trench and his work was sharpened by the fact that he was one of the half-dozen people in England who wrote to me congratulating me on my first book of short stories. There were about half a dozen: Grant Allen and Meredith first; then Huxley, Frederick Harrison, Coventry Patmore, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Herbert Trench—a notable company.

About 1910, I think it was, Trench took the Haymarket Theatre in London with Lord Howard de Walden, who is ten times a millionaire, and they began by producing Shakespeare's "Lear," following it up quickly, however, with Maeterlinck's "L'Oiseau Bleu," which was a tremendous popular success, and Lord Dunsany's "Gods of the Mountain"; but, finding the management of the theatre too arduous, Trench gave up the directorship in 1913, I think, to his friend de Walden, and retired to

Italy, taking the Villa Viviani at Settignano, a little way to the east of Florence. Here he brought out his collected poems in two volumes, and wrote his play "Napoleon," which was published by the Oxford University Press, and which he hoped to have played in London.

What a charming, delightful, sunny life.

But no such happy, fortunate life is ever granted to the leaders of men. The prophets and seers and poets who win to the forehead of the Time to come, have another guess sort of existence. Think of James Thomson, orphan and charity school-boy, who became a teacher to common soldiers in the Army and who, after winning consummate knowledge of French, German, and Italian, was ignominiously kicked out of the Army because, forsooth, he did not speak with becoming deference to a junior officer, and you have the other side of the English shield. Thomson told me that in his ten best years in London he never could earn ten dollars a week, never could get decent food and decent clothes, though he wrote perhaps the greatest poetry of the time and, as I think, some of the best prose as well.

Or take John Davidson, a poor little Scotch lad who brought it to a schoolmastership and came to London. He, too, wrote magnificent poetry and great prose, yet at the height of his achievement, at fifty years of age, standing surely among the greatest Englishmen of his time, he blew his brains out because he could not endure the poverty and daily humiliations of his life.

For all the great ones there is the crown of thorns, the dreadful valley of humiliation, and the despairing loneliness of Gethsemane, even if they do not fall beneath the Cross and suffer the agonies of Calvary.

I read Herbert Trench with interest, his slighter things

with pleasure and delight. I remember a short piece called "The Night," which conveys magically, I think, the mystical rapture of love.

## THE NIGHT

"I put aside the branches  
That clothe the Door in gloom,  
A glow-worm lit the pathway  
And a lamp out of her room  
Shook down a stifled greeting.  
How could it greet aright  
The thirst of years like deserts  
That led up to this night? . . .  
But she, like sighing forests,  
Stole on me—full of rest;  
Her hair was like the sea's wave,  
Whiteness was in her breast—

(So does one come at night upon a wall of roses)

As in a stone of crystal  
The cloudy web and flaw  
Turns, at a flash, to rainbows,  
Wing'd I became—I saw,  
I sang—but human singing  
Ceased; in a burning awe.  
Slow, amid leaves, in silence,  
Rapt as the holy pray  
(What Power of Dread around us  
Doth soul to soul betray?)  
Flame into flame we trembled,  
And the world sank away."

(Forth, over tangled walls, escaped the breath of roses.)

But why, oh why, this last line as tawdry as anything

in Rossetti? the first refrain might stand; the waves of hair and breasts' whiteness may go with the roses; but when soul is one with soul, awe is upon us: "burning awe and a Power of Dread," and the perfume of roses seems worse than out of place.

The best of Trench's earthly wisdom was, I'm afraid, not deep; take this.

#### A SONG

"Her, my own sad love divine,  
 Did I pierce as with a knife,  
 Stabbed with words that seemed not mine  
 Her, more dear to me than life.

And she raised; she raised her head,  
 Slow that smile, pale to the brow:  
 'Lovely songs when I am dead  
 You will make for me; but how  
 Shall I hear them then?' she said;  
 'Make them now, O make them now!'"

When Trench sang of the Battle of the Marne he talked about its "just defence" and "European liberties"—all the patriotic claptrap; and when he spoke about Shakespeare, the dreadful English parochialism overcame him and he called him "a circumnavigator of the soul," and wrote like this:

"And he, acquainted well with every tone  
 Of madness whining in his shroudage slender,  
 From storm and mutiny emerged alone,  
 Self-righted from the dreadful self-surrender."

Trench's criticism of his contemporaries is somewhat



thin: no bite in it: no realisation of absolute values. I sent him some books of mine recently, and I reproduce here what he wrote of them:

"You sent me your *Life of Oscar Wilde* and your studies in psychological analysis of great men, and *Stories*. About the former, I can only say I read them with consuming interest and admiration, not only of your power of writing, but of your power of sympathetic intuition. I liked the *Studies* immensely: their range is very great; and in the volume of your short stories found several masterpieces.

Yours cordially,

HERBERT TRENCH.

This is not the way one writes of masterpieces; if, indeed, they are ever found in clusters; a masterpiece is so wonderful, so miraculous an achievement that you speak of it with bated breath and shuddering admiration. Think of it: here someone has done what no other English writer has ever succeeded in doing; he has written a short story that is a masterpiece; it must, then, possess symbolic eternal significance; here is one who stands with Balzac and Hans Christian Andersen among the Immortals. Such a miracle should not be dismissed in a phrase.

Yet Trench had the root of the matter in him; think of that verse I quoted:

"I heard them calling in the streets  
That the ship I serve upon—  
The great ship Immortality—  
Was gone down, like the sun."

Had someone taken young Trench at thirteen, when he went to Haileybury, and shipped him out as a cabin-boy

on a merchant ship to make his own way in the world, he might have brought it to greatness, as Thomson did, and Davidson and Blake. But, it seems to me, he had too easy, too delightful a life; and the soul of this world does not respond to a happy and pleasant and care-free existence. Yet I hope, before I die, to have a day with him in Florence, and look with him again on the bronze doors of Ghiberti and the sanctities of plastic loveliness and grace moulded by the hands of Donatello.

. . . . .

I was not at all satisfied with this attempt at a portrait of Herbert Trench: I felt that a poet of his power must have deeper roots than I had traced or even imagined. Months after my sketch of Trench had appeared, I sent him one of my stories, and thus called forth a letter from him in which he reveals himself as no one else could have pictured him. This letter, which I reproduce, does more than complete my sketch: it turns my superficial outline into a living man of three dimensions, and gives life to a silhouette. Now one can see Trench as he lived, moved, and had his being; and I think my readers will agree with me that he was well worth knowing, much better worth knowing than I had imagined.

But here is his letter:

Florence, Italy, May 3, 1921.

MY DEAR FRANK HARRIS,

I was right glad to get your letter promising further consideration of my play "Napoleon." Whether it is on account of my name, associated with Archbishops, or on account of the TITLES of some of my poems, such as "Napoleon," "Battle of the Marne," "Requiem of Archangels," etc., certain liberal or dem-

ocratic critics (and, I imagine, among them the clever young men of the *New Republic*, and fellows like Frank Swinnerton in the *London Nation*) seem to imagine that I am on the side of reactionaries, and do not review my books at all, or stupidly.

The fact is the reverse. I am much more revolutionary than they are themselves; but I see that reform cannot come only through their methods or the methods of such men as Upton Sinclair. These men all date from Rousseau and Tom Paine, with an admixture of the Freudian psychology. Their sole point of view is that of the individual. Now I have come to see, in the process of reading and thinking, and protracted studies of the growth of constitutional law, as well as experience in education, that you must not only claim freedom and perfection of life for the individual, but (a) for the whole family group out of which he came by blood—I mean those with whom he is immediately connected by blood, however scattered in space; and also (b) for the other group into which he normally passes, in the second half of his career, when, after having been centrifugal, like a thrusting bough, he becomes centripetal, and the centre of a fresh group himself. . . . It is the failure to see the individual as being inside these invisible double groups, always in ascending motion, that has produced the confusion and suffering and waste of modern life. We persist in going on thinking and talking and laying plans, in terms of the unitary intelligence only. We produce a tramp civilisation, *starved* of ancestors, of women, children, wages and play. Whereas these groups will not be defeated in their effort; and if we neglect them, they simply fling us aside as half-dead. . . .

There is no warrant for believing that this our human social world-life will necessarily take the right turning, instead of the wrong. Individual lives have shown us freedom of error and of self-destruction; but I believe, with you, that the dangers of society are due more to callousness and stupidity than to loving over-much, for love is essential, both for life and for all understanding.

So, you see, I think we have not only got to give the "individual" a perfect and freed life, but also provide for the perfected life of the double groups inside which the individual necessarily finds himself lodged, willy-nilly, on a bough in space and time. I am, therefore, an ultra-revolutionary; but more in sympathy, on the whole, with Edmund Burke than with Upton Sinclair, gallant fighter though he is.

I leave the discovery of the meaning of "Napoleon" to yourself. So far the critics (save one) have completely missed it; and in the "Marne Battle" it is not the old patriotism and big-drum business which is to be read between the lines. It is the search for those patterns rising through human society (I mean the shapes which it takes inevitably, like frostwork on a window pane) which best transmit the disinterested spirit of humanity and of art.

Modern critics seem incapable of steady attention, which such attempts at expression require; they are jaded and full of pre-conceived opinions. However, there are young men about, like T. S. Eliot and Middleton Murry, who are beginning to use their brains in criticism again, and I am hopeful about "Napoleon" and the "Marne" poem, in the long run.

As regards your story, "A Mad Love," which you so kindly sent me, I liked greatly everything you have written concerning the music. It was magical and new, and your writing has, in everything about the strange violinist, its usual intensity of clearness, so that I read especially the first half of the story with keen pleasure and excitement. One felt the player *was* a genius. But I asked myself whether one who loved so much would finally have parted, on the score of a kiss, with a woman he cared for. What could really have prevented him again communicating with her, except a morbid bent which makes him (doesn't it?) the less tragical?

You will be amused to hear that two members of this household, and one a novelist, are at this moment reading your books, "Elder Conklin" and "The Man Shakespeare" and your old friend proposes to re-read all that you have written.

I am heartily sorry to hear of your severe chill and fever. Is not editing exhausting enough, without lecturing also? I am afraid you will never be content to be middle-aged.

Thanks for sending me the sketch of myself in the very interesting number of *Pearson's Monthly*. It was ample recognition, and true, except as to the effortless character of my existence and the absence of the normal struggle of a man of letters. A hasty private letter, however, is scarcely the place in which to lift the curtain. My life has been a thirty-one years' detour in guerilla warfare to get leisure to write poetry. I had resolved on this from the first, in spite of pennilessness and wretched health. I had a half-brother to educate out of my own income of £80 a year, two almost hopeless illnesses and major surgical operations, and then five children and a wife to support in London throughout a term of years when I was so gravely ill that I could scarcely walk home after my official work, except by groping in exhaustion from lamp-post to lamp-post. It was reflection upon lives like those of Davidson and Thomson, about which I knew a good deal, and upon Leopardi's and M. Arnold's lives, and again upon one other simple fact—namely, that the three volumes of Keats published in 1817, 1818, and 1820 were, in spite of the homage of a man like Shelley in "*Adonais*," *never reprinted at all*, and that it was not till 1848, *twenty-seven years after Keat's death*, with the publication of Lord Houghton's "*Life*," that Keats received any general recognition whatever as a poet from the English people—I say, it was steady reflection upon these capital facts that determined the practical side of my career. If beauty in literature and the genius of a Keats—far greater than Davidson's or poor Thomson's—was invisible to the English people, and if among the English people at this barbarous and childish stage of their growth I had to live, I must take counsel from my foregoers' example, and from Wordsworth's, whose poetry "*did not bring him in enough to pay for his bootlaces*." And so, like yourself, I settled down to a desperate battle, and a detour of thirty-one years, to earn a livelihood outside literature.

Well, I have done a very few things as I designed them:

"Deirdre," "Apollo," "Marne," "Napoleon." The battle is not yet quite over, and I don't altogether regret it. But do not try to persuade me that poetry is *only* the issue of a dire struggle with poverty. I remember that comfortable bourgeois, Flaubert. I remember the leisured landowners, Tolstoy, Tourguenieff, Byron, and Shelley. I remember Shakespeare, a prosperous shareholder in a theatre; and about 95 per cent. of English poets and men of letters, like Milton, Swift, Marvell, Donne, and Sterne, have been at a University of some kind, which at all events argues a means of subsistence.

Nevertheless, my dear Frank Harris, I know what you mean, and I remember always your own kind encouragement to myself and others—to anyone, in fact, to whom, as to yourself, his art was really "a divine vocation." For those you always had a generous place in your heart.

You may be interested to hear that I had already determined to cut out three lines, and the one you dislike, in the little lyric, "The Night," which you quote.

Always cordially yours,

HERBERT TRENCH.

Our main difference still yawned as an abyss between us: the great poet, the supreme artist, must have all the handicaps, in my opinion; must know the extremes of poverty and misery and humiliation, or he will never reach the cloud-capped heights. Goethe knew this, when he wrote:

"Wer nie sein Brod mit Thraenen ass,  
Wer nie die kummervollen Naechte  
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass  
Der kennt euch nicht, Ihr Himmlische Maechte."

Trench didn't state the case fairly: Shakespeare as "a prosperous shareholder in a theatre" tells nothing of the lad Shakespeare who had to be taken away from



the Grammar School at Stratford at thirteen, when he still knew "little Latin and less Greek," because of his father's ruin; Shakespeare, who held gentlemen's horses in front of the theatre as a "groom," according to Green, knew poverty at its bitterest. And neither Byron nor Milton ever reached the God-illumined heights. Herbert Trench went to a great public school, then to the University with a scholarship, and at once afterwards walked into a comfortable position and income. I knew nothing of his illnesses; but his ill-health came later; the character is formed in boyhood, and Goethe himself suffered because of his prosperous, care-free life in the formative years. The truth is:

*Those whom He loveth, He chasteneth!*

[While preparing this book for press, I heard that Trench had died, I did not know of his illness, nor of his most recent work; the bare fact alone reached me.

I was shocked: for Trench had always seemed to me full of virile life and energy and I expected better poems from him than any he had yet given; but alas! it was not to be: he is one more "inheritor of unfulfilled renown."]

## X

### MAX, "THE INCOMPARABLE"

WHEN I first saw him, Max Beerbohm reminded me of one of those lunar creatures, visitants from some other planet, with more brains than we earth-born folk, and no passions. A large round head and goggly, round eyes were accentuated, so to speak, by a very slight, youthful figure of middle height, peculiarly well dressed. Many Oxford undergraduates are well dressed, but Max was well dressed with a difference, a hint of strangeness in the floating tie, or primrose gloves or flowered buttonhole, lending a touch of the exotic to the conventional—a sort of symbol of unique personality. His manners, too, were curiously like his dress: of the best conventional pattern, a little quiet, perhaps, as befitted his youth, and reserved; nevertheless he had certainly his own *credos*—ethics of social behaviour, æsthetic and literary tastes—all testifying to the singularity of his likes and dislikes. Whatever was odd attracted him especially; by some fine instinct he was aware that nature reveals her secrets in her abnormalities.

Now and then he went astray with the many "incapable of perfectness," as Bacon said, and worshipped some false god. Just as Shaw tries to find something to admire in Mark Twain, so Max, I remember, was resolved to speak of Henry James with reverence.

When I derided "Daisy Miller" and the other sense-

less abortions of mediocrity, Max retreated at once to his last line of defence: "James builds up his sentences," he said, "and arranges his word-bricks with patient artistry"; finally adding: "James writes like no one else, and surely that alone lends supreme distinction to style." But I would not have it: "No one writes prose like Martin Tupper," I continued, "or like Swinburne, and assuredly no one wants to: there is no distinction in bad work, and that it's laboured is an additional offence." Smilingly, with the tinge of pity that suited his youth, Max recognised the obstinacy of my mental astigmatism.

I liked Max, too, for his tempered enthusiasms: one day, during the Boer War, he wanted to know how I had come to the belief that the Boers would win many victories at first and yet the tide would turn against them in three or four months: above all, why I had said that the war, estimated to last a month by the British Head-quarter Staff, would certainly last two years and cost not ten million sterling, as the authorities said, but a thousand millions. I had to explain South Africa to him, its immense distances and paltry means of communication, and the simplicity of war itself as a science, that Kellermann or Wellington was about as good a general as Napoleon, though infinitely inferior to him in every other art. Max seized the point at once with the divination of one who was within sight of the same truth. Max had the desire of genius to see things as they are, and to be witty through wisdom. He said once that Pater wrote English as if it were a dead language, putting his finger on the secret of Pater's occasional triumph.

I remember, too, his contempt of Alfred Austin, who had just been made Poet Laureate by Lord Salisbury.

"Alfred the Little," was his comment, "succeeding Alfred the Great" (Tennyson).

I could not resist telling him what someone had said after a dinner at Lord Wolseley's to Alfred Austin, who remarked in affected humility that he had "to write poetry to keep the wolf from the door."

"I see, I see," cried the bored listener; "excellent, excellent! You read your verses to the wolf!"

Time and again I was struck by Max's sobriety of judgment and by the indefatigable zest he showed in trying to get the aptest expression for his thought. He impressed me so greatly that, when Shaw gave up writing the theatrical criticism for *The Saturday Review*, I asked Max to fill his place. I was perhaps influenced in my choice by seeing his caricatures: they are among the best of this time; on occasion exceedingly witty, always interesting. Who can ever forget the one of Shaw standing on his head and finding the world funny from that position. "Still, in that posture, Shaw!" is Max's caption, and the lackadaisical limpness of Arthur Balfour's pose is just as incisive. His picture of Lord Tennyson reading a poem to Queen Victoria is as contemptuous as Rochefort's villainous but witty pun on her name: "This old stage-coach that persists in calling herself a Victoria."

Read the "Christmas Garland," in which Max parodies a score of his contemporaries, apologising, by the way, only to two of them for the liberty—Meredith and my humble self.

I remember Meredith made me roar by asserting that all the parodies were excellent except his, which is just what all of us felt!

As a caricaturist, Max ranks with Forain and Sem, and

is not surpassed, in my opinion, even by the kindly humour of Carlo Pellegrini.

It is more difficult to place Max as an essayist: he has done two or three charming little sketches and one astonishing picture, "No. 2, Putney," which gives, perhaps, the truest and most intimate portrait of Swinburne ever painted in words. A little masterpiece in vivid reality of representment and sympathetic treatment: even Watts-Dunton is handled with kindliness. In the essay on "Laughter" he makes his confession: he cannot read Bergson, and wrestled in vain with Schopenhauer (I suspect he never opened his essays); worst of all, he could make nothing of William James: he was "insensible to his thrillingness. His gaiety," he confesses, "did not make me gay; his crystal clarity confused me dreadfully": in fact, William James affected Max almost as painfully as Henry James affects me.

And now for my confession: I like Max, and yet his "Happy Hypocrite" left me cold, and "Zuleika Dobson" floored me. Though he admits, somewhere or other, that he always felt he could write stories like De Maupassant, his stories didn't interest me, and as I grow older I can only read what interests me. For instance, the story of Max's marriage, as his half-sister, Mrs. Neville, told it, interested and amused me exceedingly.

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Neville began, "Max was married, you can take it from me, legally married in church even, to a very charming and very pretty girl, and they've gone off to Rapallo on the Italian Riviera for the honeymoon. Max went through the ceremony beautifully, as such a dandy would, omitting nothing, not even the first kiss to the blushing bride. I could not help telling him how proud I was of him, and now, I said, as we were all leav-

ing the church and the bride was getting into the carriage, I must say 'Good-bye, dear Max.' Suddenly his marvellous self-possession broke down; frantically he seized me by the arm: 'You're not going to leave me *alone* with her,' he cried. And when I replied: 'Indeed, I am!' he looked at me reproachfully, muttering: 'It is hardly decent!'

"I laughed at his quaint embarrassment; but I believe they are now very happy."

After this, one could hardly deny that Max Beerbohm is a humorist of the finest water. He is something more even than that.

When I was put in Brixton Prison for a month for contempt of court, in the beginning of 1914, Max was almost the only writer who came to my help. He put forth a cartoon depicting us both at table; a large bottle of wine stood at my right hand, and I was gesticulating vigorously. Max's caption underneath it was, "To the best talker in London from one of his best listeners"—and his own round-eyed, preternaturally wise-looking face was not his worst caricature. He added to the caption the hope that the scene would often be repeated. I can only say I could wish no better listener than Max.

What a gifted family it was. About Sir Herbert Tree, the actor, opinions may differ, but no one can deny his talent and his charming kindness. He was generous to everybody. And there was a brother Julius, who was a great gentleman and a man of absolute genius. I should like to do a portrait of Julius, for he was as witty as Max is humorous, and as good a writer of poetry as Max is a good writer of prose; but alas, his poetry has never been published, I don't know why; even his humorous verse has been lost, or at least has never been



put into book form, and so the facts are lacking with which one might reconstruct a living figure.

Mrs. Neville, too, is nearly as humorous as Max, and one can only wonder what that strange thing called "genius" is that this whole family should possess it in such an extraordinary degree.

## XI

### HENRI MATISSE AND RENOIR

#### MASTER PAINTERS

IT was in 1911 or 1912, in Roger Fry's memorable exhibition in London of the French Impressionists and Cubists, that I first saw a nude by Matisse—a girl's figure. At first glance it looked crude, badly drawn; then I noticed that the bare outline gave a sense of weight, and suddenly I saw that the drawing which seemed like a child's drawing was, in fact, masterly in simplification, suggesting everything; full of meaning, just because of what it left unsaid. The Cézannes had already made a great impression on me, and, meeting Bernard Shaw, I found that he shared my feeling, was impressed as I was impressed; certain landscapes of Cézanne were astonishing; a Tahitian, nude too, of Gauguin—a brown girl thrown face downwards on the white sheet of a bed, like a famous Manet, and almost as striking, I thought. Time and again I returned to study this Cézanne or that, and nearly as often I went to the Matisse for the astounding craftsmanship of the drawing. The other day I heard that Matisse was in Nice: I called on him, and told him how I admired his work. He met me cordially, took me up to his studio, showed me his latest sketches, and we talked—chiefly painting—for an hour or more.

Henri Matisse does not look his fifty years of age: a

man of middle height, strongly built, with square shoulders; a well-featured face, noticeably broad and high forehead; round grey eyes; sparse hair; short, thin beard, and small moustache—all reddish auburn tinged with grey; he is neatly, conventionally dressed. No portrait here, I admit, because there is no predominant feature—Matisse's face does not suggest his talent—he looks a healthy, well-to-do bourgeois. Our talk was cut short by a girl, clearly the model whose figure Matisse had used in a dozen of the drawings and paintings scattered about. I took my leave; but as he pressed me to call again soon, as he would be going to Paris in a short time, I called again two or three days later, and we had another talk—this time more personal, intimate.

His entire sincerity impressed me; there was no pose in him, no affectation, he was all given to his work.

"Did you reach the mastery quickly?" I asked, "or had you a long apprenticeship?"

"My life's story," he said, "is very uneventful: I can tell it very shortly. I was born on the last day of 1869 at Chateau-Cambresis (Nord). My parents, well-to-do shopkeepers, wanted me to be a lawyer, and from eighteen to twenty-two years of age I honestly tried to be an attorney's clerk at St. Quentin. But there was a school of embroidery on cloth founded by Quentin de Latour in the town, and I was so attracted by painting and drawing that I got up every morning, even in winter, and from 7 to 8 o'clock attended the classes. At length my parents consented to let me give up law and go to Paris to study painting. A painter in St. Quentin knew Bouguereau and Gabriel Terrier, and it was to Bouguereau that I went on reaching Paris. A curious choice for me—eh?" Matisse went on, laughing, "unexpected, eh?"

I stuck it nearly three months and then resolved that I was too old for their teaching. I left them and went to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and copied the antiques while the light lasted, naturally the old Greek sculptures. There I had the good luck to meet Gustave Moreau, who was kind enough to open his workshop to me, where I drew every morning from living models."

"Did Moreau teach you much?" I asked.

"Nothing," replied Matisse; "no one ever teaches us anything, and Moreau was too literary; they don't see things as we painters do. In the afternoons I went to the Louvre and copied the Chardins and Poussins and Raphaels: I'll never forget Fragonard's 'La Leçon de Musique,' or Chardin's 'La Pipe' or 'La Raie' or 'La Pyramide des Fruits,' or Poussin's 'Narcisse' or 'Bacchanale,' or Raphael's Portrait of Balthazar Castiglione, or Philippe de Champagne's 'Dead Christ.' I can show you a reproduction of my copy. All the copies I made at this time were bought by the French Government and sent to provincial museums. For instance, my copy of the 'Chasse' of Annibal Carracci is in the Hôtel de Ville at Grenoble. I only mention this to show that I was a diligent and rather a successful student. I really loved copying masterpieces. Unlike most artists," Matisse went on, "I like reproductions of my work: the more you give, the more there is in the reproduction."

"I see," I cried; "I had not thought of that."

"But my true pleasure came," Matisse continued, "on leaving the Louvre, when I used to hurry to the *rue Lafitte* to Durand Ruel's shop, where I could gaze my fill at the Cézannes and other Impressionists, and so complete my view of the growth of art right up to our day.

"Some fifteen years ago now, a group of young artists got together and asked me to come and correct their work: they were nearly all gifted, so I consented, and soon the school grew to sixty or more, and took too much of my time and thought. I came to understand that I was wasting my time in helping others, that every artist has to stand on his own feet and learn his own lessons, and that I, too, must for the future concentrate on my work and leave others to their own inspiration. Since then I have, I think, done better. Now, from time to time, I have the joy to believe that this or that piece of my work has real stuff in it, and may endure. That's heaven for the artist. Besides, I have the pleasure to know that my work is appreciated more and more widely, and now makes life easy to me and my wife and my three children, whom I love, and who love me. And so I regard myself with reason, I think, as a happy man, though I have more than one shirt," and he laughed, gaily, charmingly.

A little later I asked Matisse to dinner: he replied that he never ate at night, but he'd be glad to come in after dinner. When he came, I naturally wanted to know why he did not eat dinner. "For ten or twelve years now," he said, "I have found the mid-day meal enough. It's a pleasure to eat when you're hungry," he went on; "I love my dinner in the middle of the day and eat like an ogre, and get a little siesta afterwards and digest it all. But if I eat again at night, I feel heavy and soon awake with a nightmare. I go to bed at ten and get up about six, partly because I want all the light I can get. I've almost perfect health," he continued, "better now than when I was twenty. One must learn how to live. I drink very little, usually put water in

my wine or take a glass of beer; no spirits, no excess of any kind." Matisse had practical wisdom and that astonishing French moderation that uses without abusing all the pleasures of life—a wise man and a great workman! Several times in talking he illustrated some peculiarity of painting with musical examples.

"You love music?" I asked, at length.

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "it's my one recreation. I play the violin," he added; "have always played it from childhood; but as I grew to some mastery in my art, I wasn't satisfied to play my violin so badly. A master musician told me that if I practised for a year I'd get the comparative skill I wanted, so once I took lessons for a year and often played six hours a day, and, as a result, I am able now to please myself by my playing, and sometimes my friends."

My admiration of Matisse grew, the more I knew of him, so at length I turned the talk to the strange development of the painter's art that has taken place as a result of studying Kakemonos and Japanese prints and, above all, the marvellous Chinese paintings. To my delight, I found that Matisse had gone to London, and knew the wonders of the British Museum. "A poet," he said simply, "showed me there all the marvels of the Chinese masters: it was the revelation to me of a new world. All barriers of race and time broke down before the realisation forced in on me that these Chinamen a thousand years ago saw our problems and solved them much as we are solving them."

"We have the record," I could not help breaking in, "of one Chinese master, 1700 years ago, who said he did not want a mere representation of life, but longed



to paint the rhythm of things; a more philosophic Rembrandt."

"I understand," said Matisse, "but I love life, love to find beauty everywhere; mere beauty——"

"What about the younger painters in Paris?" I broke in, "the Cubists, so-called, and——"

"Oh, I'm too self-centred," cried Matisse, "too much occupied with my work. I have enough to do for twenty years yet. Monet is still doing lovely things at Giverny; he's strong as a tree; he eats and drinks, takes his coffee and a glass of old brandy afterwards, like a young man; and works, works as well as ever; some of his latest things are among his best——"

"Oh, you painters," I cried, with a touch of envy, "you are the darlings of the gods."

"How do you mean?" cried Matisse; "we have no advantages that I can see."

"First of all, your art!" I exclaimed. "It's the only art of universal appeal; the Chinaman, or Jap, or the Negro in the heart of Africa, takes pleasure in a painting, understands more or less of its beauty and power. But we men of letters are prisoned among our own race. If they dislike us, and the mass is sure to dislike whoever does good new work (he nodded), we have no other appeal. Whistler, rejected in the United States and in Great Britain, sold a picture to the Luxembourg, got hung in Paris and praised, when still a youngster, by the French, and so managed at long last to impose himself. Great writers are not so fortunate."

"I see what you mean," replied Matisse, "and I'm fain to agree with you, though the disabilities of the writer never occurred to me before. We painters are

favoured; but we can make the road up hard enough, if we want to. My masters were Cézanne and Renoir. I never met Cézanne, I regret to say; but four years ago I got to know Renoir at Cagnes, and he made a profound impression on me.

#### RENOIR

"Ah!" Matisse went on, enthusiastically, "I've not told you of Renoir. Did you know him?" (I shook my head.) "His life was a long martyrdom: he suffered for twenty years from the worst form of rheumatism, the joints of his fingers were all immense, calloused, horribly distorted. He could only hold the brush between his thumb and forefinger, high up, for the finger was powerless, and all the inside of his right hand was seamed with wounds and cuts, distilling blood and pus that had to be washed and attended to every little while. At the bottom of his back was a great running sore that went some five inches up the vertebra, and had to be washed out every few hours with disinfectants. And yet he worked on gaily, full of high spirits and charming wit. For years before the end he had to be carried up and down stairs, could only sit a little while in one position, then had to be lifted and put in another; but he weighed nothing; he had wasted to a mere handful of bones. One could pick him up in one hand quite easily; his eyes held all the life of his body, his eyes and his tongue and his poor twisted, deformed, bleeding paw."

"And he still did beautiful things?" I asked.

"All his best work!" replied Matisse gravely; "as his body dwindled, the soul in him seemed to grow stronger continually and to express itself with more radiant ease."

"John Quinn in New York," I remarked, "has flower-pieces of his that are miracles of beauty——"

"But his nudes," Matisse broke in; "the loveliest nudes ever painted: no one has done better—no one. Often he would complete one in an afternoon; but his last work he kept by him for over a year. It is his masterpiece, one of the most beautiful pictures ever painted."

"And the theme?" I asked.

"Two young girls naked on a bank of flowers," Matisse continued: "'God's best works,' Renoir used to call them, 'His supreme achievement.' I know nothing more beautiful. His sons are going to give it to the State, though they were offered two hundred and fifty thousand francs for it when Renoir died a couple of years ago, and they are not rich. Oh, Renoir was a marvel! If you could have seen that little wizened manakin with the lambent eyes, and the picture growing in heavenly beauty at every touch; if you could have seen him and heard him talk—sadly never! He would tell of the girls he had kissed—the best thing in life—he would cry; and, dying, he enjoyed a smutty story, and would tell one with superb verve when Death had already his hand on his shoulder and his hours were numbered. He used to love to tell stories of the earlier painters, his friends, especially how Harpignies used always to liken himself to a *poireau* (leek): white above, but vigorous green below.

"And quite at the end, when I used to fear to call, thinking the blinds would be drawn, Renoir was at his best. Once when he squirmed with pain, and the brush dropped from his hand, I cried to him: 'Why torture yourself? You have done so much, Master! You may

well be satisfied.' He turned to me, and the smile spread from his riotous eyes over his face: 'The pain passes, Matisse; but the beauty remains. I'm quite happy, and I shall not die till I have completed my masterwork. Yesterday I thought it was finished, that I could not put on another brush-stroke to better it, but *la nuit* (and he made a grimace of remembered pain) *porte conseil* (the night brings wisdom); and now I see that three or four days' more work on it will give it a deeper touch. I shan't die till I've given my best.' And he laughed delightedly and went on with his work; the attendant had to lift or lower the picture every little while at his request, as he could only paint just in front of his hand. I've always felt," Matisse continued, with tears in his voice, "that recorded time holds no nobler story, no more heroic, no more magnificent achievement than that of Renoir; dying in agony, yet determined to put all the loveliness of desire and all the beauty of nature, all the sweet joy of living into one deathless scene as a possession of men for ever, a blessing without alloy——"

As Matisse spoke, the picture was etched, so to say, in my very soul; the poor dying master with his bleeding hand, the symbol of his artistry and all it had cost him, and beyond and above this, the sacred enthusiasm, the deathless endeavour, that would conjure beauty out of suffering and make loveliness immortal.

## XII

### H. L. MENCKEN, CRITIC

**I**T often seems to me that criticism is the true art of this twentieth century. Creative art is based on belief, and there never was a period so empty of belief as the present. It isn't only that we don't believe in God or a future life; it is that we believe in nothing; Goethe's faith in the Good and the True is as ridiculous to us as the faith of Paul; science has dis-anchored us and set us adrift. We question all things, and hold fast to none.

And so criticism comes to be our creative work; Huneker told us of the great musicians, and now, when the pen has fallen from his fingers, comes Mencken to take his place.

Mencken I knew by reputation before returning to America in 1914. As the editor of the *Smart Set*, he had published some of my stories, and as soon as I met him I realised that he was "some one," as the French say; a strong, defiant personality. About middle height, he's sturdily built, with a good round head; large, rough-hewn, but regular features; and noteworthy, luminous blue eyes; the forehead is low, but broad and balanced, with a good chin: altogether an attractive appearance.

Mencken admits that his school-learning is to seek; his first real teacher of style and thought was Thomas Huxley, and a better master no one could wish. Huxley's advice was always moral: "Be honest, especially with

yourself; think before you speak; and when you have something interesting to say, say it as simply and as tersely as you can." Such formulæ do not exhaust the subject, but the roots of good writing are there. And now let me at once come to Mencken's declaration of faith; in it we shall find his qualities and his limitations; it is so frank that in itself it constitutes a portrait. He writes:

"I am against all theologians, professors, editorial-writers, right-thinkers, and reformers. I am against patriotism, because it demands the acceptance of propositions that are obviously imbecile—*e. g.*, that an American Presbyterian is the equal of Anatole France, Brahms, or Ludendorff. I am against democracy, for the same reason; it is indistinguishable from lunacy. To me, democracy seems to be founded wholly upon the inferior man's envy of his superior—of the man who is having a better time. That is also the origin of Puritanism. I detest all such things. I acknowledge that many men are my superiors, and always defer to them. In such a country as the United States, of course, few of that sort are to be encountered. Hence my apparent foreign-ness; most of the men I respect are foreigners. But this is not my fault. I'd be glad to respect Americans, if they were respectable. George Washington was. I admire him greatly.

"I detest men who meanly admire mean things—*e. g.*, fellows who think that Roosevelt was a great man. . . .

"My objection to Americans is that they like to fight with the enemy strapped to the board. Hence the persecution of Germans during the war, the robbery of helpless alien business men, the American Legion, the American Protective League, the attack on Spain, the wars with



Nicaragua, Santo Domingo, etc. This poltroonery is not essentially American, it is simply democratic; the inferior man always shows it.

"I am, tested by the prevailing definitions, a bad American. I do not believe this country has the glorious future that patrioteers talk of. It will probably remain second-rate for a long while—a mere milch cow for England. Most of the American ideals, so called, that I know of seem to me to be idiotic.

"I am an extreme libertarian, and believe in absolutely free speech, especially for anarchists, Socialists, and other such fools. . . .

"I am against jailing men for their opinions, or, for that matter, for anything else. I am opposed to religions, because all of them seek to throttle opinion. I do not believe in education, and am glad I never went to a University. . . .

"My skepticism is intolerably offensive to the normal American man; only the man under strong foreign influences sees anything in it save a gross immorality."

I feel inclined to chortle and cheer as I read; here is a real man, one exclaims, a man worth knowing, worth listening to.

But think of this as written by Anatole France; how different it would be, how urbane and sweet; no defiance; scepticism deftly suggested; no contempt; good-humoured acceptance even of the bourgeois. Clearly the winds of Puritanism and the icy chill of brainless indifference are so strong in the States that Mencken's honesty becomes a defiant declaration of independence.

Now let us pass to his works: I am dealing mainly with his two volumes entitled "Prejudices." Vincent O'Sullivan says:

"His book, 'Prejudices: First Series,' I have found the most interesting book of criticism which has appeared since George Moore's 'Impressions and Opinions.' Some of the subjects are not as important as Moore's, but that is not Mencken's fault; you don't find Verlaines and Degases and Manets and Antoine's Théâtre Libre fresh and unknown every day."

That seems to me a mere excuse and not valid. It would be easy to pick men to write about as interesting as any Moore dealt with, and as little known. If you have genius yourself, you can discover it on all sides. Long since Moore there have been discoveries in the arts of surpassing interest. It is now fifteen years since I discovered the art of the South Sea Islanders in the British Museum, and took Rodin to share my delight. Only the other day Roger Fry and other skirmishers discovered the magic in negro sculptures, in gods and fetishes from Central African barbarians, that can be compared with the best Assyrian work; but Mencken is occupied rather with the obvious—another shortcoming of the country, and not of the critic.

Mencken writes of Wells as the "late Mr. Wells," and his judgment of him is worth quoting, because he sees that his deterioration began even before the war.

In "Joan and Peter," he finds that Wells is already beginning to take himself seriously as a prophet and seer; "in brief, he suffers from a messianic delusion, and once a man begins to suffer from a messianic delusion his days as a serious artist are ended."

"The prophesying business," Mencken went on, "is like writing fugues; it is fatal to every one save the man of absolute genius. The lesser fellow—and Wells, for

all his cleverness, is surely one of the lesser fellows—is bound to come to grief at it.”

And there is better than this in Mencken.

He notices that there are saving moments in Wells: “It was in ‘Boon,’ I believe, that his irony showed its last flare; there is a portrait of the United States in that book which lingers in the memory—‘a vain, garrulous, and prosperous female of uncertain age, and still more uncertain temper, with unfounded pretensions to intellectuality, and an idea of refinement of the most negative description—the Aunt-Errant of Christendom.’ ”

Then Mencken goes on to describe Wells’s rapid descent. “In ‘First and Last Things’ he preaches a flabby Socialism, and then, towards the end, admits frankly that it doesn’t work; in ‘The Research Magnificent’ he smouches an idea from Nietzsche and mauls it badly; in ‘The Undying Fire’ he first states the obvious and then flees from it in alarm; in his war books he borrows right and left . . . and everything he borrows is flat.”

And the summing up: “A little shelf of very excellent novels—a shelf flanked on the one side by a long row of extravagant romances in the manner of Jules Verne, and on the other side by an even longer row of puerile tracts.

“But let us not underestimate his best work because it is in such uninviting company. There is in it some of the liveliest, most original, most amusing, and withal most respectable fiction that England has produced in our time. In that fiction there is a sufficient memorial to a man who, between two debauches of clap-trap, had his day as an artist.”

Now all this, in my opinion, is first-rate criticism. Needless to say, the man who can deal with Wells in this masterly fashion also handles Arnold Bennett just as decisively.

Mencken says admirably that "Bennett by the route of scepticism arrives at sooth-saying; that he actually believes in his own theorising is inconceivable . . . his bedizened platitudes can only be accepted in America . . . and of all his books probably the worst are his book on the war and his book on the United States." And then: "It would be no juggling with paradox to argue that at bottom Bennett is scarcely a novelist at all. Is there any character in any of these books that shows signs of living as Pendennis lives or Emma Bovary or David Copperfield?"

"But though Bennett may fail in the capital function of an artist, he deserves consideration as a craftsman."

That, again, is the truth told precisely. But of all these essays, the one on Dean Howells is the one I like best.

"Who actually reads the Howells novels?" Mencken asks. "Who even remembers their names? The truth about Howells is that he really has nothing to say."

That is the truth about Howells, however the *New York Times* and its Professor Brander Matthews may puff and blow.

Then I take up what Mencken has to say on Veblen, and find him delightfully characterised as "a geyser of pishposh" with "an unprecedented talent for saying nothing in an august and heroic manner."

Later he treats the New Poetry Movement, and, thank God, puts Edgar Lee Masters and Miss Amy Lowell in their proper places as absolutely negligible. "Vachel

Lindsay," he adds, "has done his own burlesque. His retirement to the chautauquas is self-criticism of uncommon penetration. Frost? A standard New England poet, . . . a Whittier without the whiskers. Robinson? Ditto, but with a politer bow. Giovannitti? A fourth-rate Sandberg. Ezra Pound? The American in headlong flight from America—a professor turned fantee, Abelard in grand opera."

He dismisses them all—the bulls and ukases of Pound with the puerilities of Kreyborg. But alas and alack, he suddenly bursts into eulogy of Lizette Woodworth Reese, who, he says, "has written more sound poetry, more genuinely eloquent and beautiful poetry, than all the new poets put together." If he were in love with Lizette, I could excuse him; but I don't believe he can even urge this mitigating plea! Mencken simply doesn't care for poetry at all.

Then Mencken talks of the Heir of Mark Twain—the celebrity of Irvin S. Cobb. He calls it rightly "a caressingly ironical spectacle." And through six or eight pages he shows how thin and cheap Cobb's humour is. And it is even thinner than Mencken guesses. He tells us that Cobb has a page on whiskers:

"Whiskers of various fantastic varieties are mentioned—trellis whiskers, bosky whiskers, ambush whiskers, loose, luxuriant whiskers, landscaped whiskers, whiskers that are winter quarters for pathogenic organisms."

Mencken does not know that all this is absolutely annexed from a would-be journalist-humorist in England called Frank Richardson, who wrote on "face seaweed" twenty-odd years ago.

But perhaps the best piece of work Mencken has done is his portrait of Herman Sudermann. He puts his finger

with curious exactness on all of Sudermann's borrowings, he even sees that the end of "Heimat" is an echo of Augier's "Le Mariage d'Olympe."

"The trouble with Sudermann, here and elsewhere, is that he has no sound underpinnings, and is a bit uncertain about his characters and his story. He starts off furiously, let us say, as a Zola, and then dilutes Zolaism with romance, and then pulls himself up and begins to imitate Ibsen, and then trips and falls headlong into the sugar bowl of sentimentality. Lily Czepanek, in 'Das Hohe Lied,' swoons at critical moments, like the heroine of a tale for chambermaids."

This is an example of Mencken's sometimes careless writing. By "sound underpinnings" he means intellectual grasp, what Rossetti spoke of as the one necessary thing in all high creative work: "sheer brains."

I am glad Mencken picked out "The Purpose," as one of the best of Sudermann's stories. It is, beyond all comparison, the best thing he ever did. "The Song of Death," too, is good. In fine: "Write off 'Das Hohe Lied,' 'Frau Sorge,' and all the plays; a Sudermann remains who must be put in a high and honourable place, and will be remembered."

Then there is riotous fun. Mary MacLane with her "gingery carnalities," and Robert W. Chambers and Pollard and Hamlin Garland, and the merchant of mush called Henry S. Harrison, and the last of the Victorians, as he calls William Allen White, and finally Blasco Ibañez, the much bepudded and absolutely tenth-rate writer.

The second series of Mr. Mencken's "Prejudices" is not so good as the first, but there is one essay in it better



than anything in the first—the essay he calls “Roosevelt: An Autopsy.” The whole thing is the most tremendous indictment of America and our American Government that has yet found its way into print. He begins, as in duty bound, by contrasting Roosevelt with Wilson:

“The fraudulence of Wilson is now admitted by all save a few survivors of the old corps of official press-agents, most of them devoid of both honesty and intelligence. No unbiassed man, in the presence of the revelations of Bullitt, Keynes and a hundred other witnesses, and of the Russian and Shantung performances, and of innumerable salient domestic phenomena, can now believe that the *Doctor dulcifluens* was ever actually in favour of any of the brummagem ideals he once wept for, to the edification of a moral universe. . . .

“They were, at best, no more than ingenious *ruses de guerre*, and even in the day of their wildest credit it was the Espionage Act and the Solicitor-General to the Post Office, rather than any plausibility in their substance, that got them that credit.

“In Roosevelt’s case the imposture is less patent; he died before it was fully unmasked. What is more, his death put an end to whatever investigation of it was under way, for American sentimentality holds that it is indecent to inquire into the weaknesses of the dead, at least until all the flowers have withered on their tombs.”

But he goes on to explain Roosevelt in the most intimate, astonishing way:

“There was, to his mind, a simple body of primary doctrine, and dissent from it was the foulest of crimes. No man could have been more bitter against opponents, or more unfair to them, or more ungenerous. In this

department, indeed, even so gifted a specialist in dishonourable controversy as Dr. Wilson has seldom surpassed him."

And finally:

"It is the official doctrine in England that Wilson was forced into the war by an irresistible movement from below—that the plain people compelled him to abandon neutrality and move reluctantly upon the Germans. Nothing could be more untrue. The plain people, at the end of 1916, were in favour of peace, and they believed that Wilson was in favour of peace. How they were gradually worked up to complaisance and then to enthusiasm and then to hysteria and then to actual mania—this is a tale to be told in more leisurely days and by historians without boards of trustees on their necks. For the present purpose it is sufficient to note that the whole thing was achieved so quickly and so neatly that its success left Roosevelt surprised and helpless. His issue had been stolen from directly under his nose. He was left standing, daunted and alone, a boy upon a burning deck. It took him months to collect his scattered wits, and even then his attack upon the administration was feeble and ineffective. To the plain people it seemed a mere ill-natured snapping at a successful rival, which in fact it was, and so they paid no heed to it, and Roosevelt found himself isolated once more. Thus he passed from the scene into the shadows, a broken politician and a disappointed man."

That's the truth, if ever it was written.

Clearly this Mencken is a publicist of the first class; he deals victoriously with the best writers of his time, and in still more masterly fashion with the political guides and governors. No position can daunt him; no puffing

hoodwink; he will see for himself, and state what he sees without fear or favour. Only one or two journalists of this calibre are given to any country in a single generation; he ranks with the Lemaitres and the Shaws, above the Garvins and the Bennetts.

What, now, are his blind spots and shortcomings? His judgment of poetry, as we have seen, is worse than weak; he treats "The Jungle" of Upton Sinclair as a mere compilation; he swears by all his gods that no propagandist book can be a work of art, forgetting the "Don Quixote" of Cervantes, and "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina" of Tolstoi; and, worst of all, he praises Mark Twain as a great writer: "a greater artist than Emerson or Poe or Whitman"; his "Huckleberry Finn," he asserts, is a masterpiece, and his "Mysterious Stranger" can never die.

Well, time and again I have given it as my mature conviction that Mark Twain is not among even the second-rate writers. But Mencken's assertions force me to face the issue once more. I read "Huckleberry Finn" thirty years ago, and thought it a fair boy's book; but nothing more. Now I have read it again, and "The Mysterious Stranger" as well; and my readers can decide whether or not I judge righteous judgment.

But between Mencken and myself the agreements are far more numerous and infinitely more important than the points of difference. He tells me he is getting more interested in the psychology of nations than in that of individuals, and twenty years ago that very study claimed me with a complete obsession. I wish to say only this about it now: if Mencken sees other nations as distinctly as he sees the American, he may throw new light on the unexplored accidents. It seems easy to know Germany

and Italy and Spain; but how hard France is to know really well! All the world knows Paris and the *Figaro*; but how many know the serious France, the France of *Le Temps* and *La Revue des Deux Mondes*? Everybody knows French meanness, the French *grippe-sou*, the France that lends usuriously *à la petite semaine*; but who knows chivalrous France, the France that, if this idiot Kaiser had proposed to apportion Alsace and Lorraine ethnologically, as I proposed twenty years ago, would have embraced him and given up for ever all idea of *la revanche*?

✓ To say that Mencken is the best critic in the United States is less than his due; he is one of the best critics in English. In his absorption in criticism alone, and in a certain masculine abruptness and careless piquancy of style, he reminds me often of Hazlitt, one of the few critics who belong to literature. In regard to creative work, especially to stories and plays, his judgment is often at fault, and always leaves a good deal to be desired; but in dealing with politicians and political issues, how sane he is, how brave, how honest, how surely he finds the fitting word, the blistering epithet! And what a delight it is to hear this bold strong voice in the unholy din of sycophants and of the hirelings' praise and blame which makes the American press the vilest in Christendom! And kindly Mencken is, too; kindly as only the honest can afford to be; full of the milk of human kindness for all those who choose the upward way.

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### XIII

#### SENATOR LA FOLLETTE

WHEN I went West to lecture early in 1919, I found the forces of reaction everywhere dominant, not to say domineering. The vague talk of "Americanism, a hundred per cent. Americanism," was regarded as intelligent, and stifled all thought. Three months afterwards, feeling had changed; the returned soldiers and the Veterans' Association, not the Wall Street Legion, had altered and amended public opinion.

Here and there cheers were raised for the Constitution and for freedom. A month later still, in February, 1920, the change of heart was more pronounced; and in March I ventured to predict that a candidate, such as Hiram Johnson, who pleaded for the Constitution and the elementary rights of free men, would beat the reactionary Woods and Lowdens to a frazzle. And this is what is happening now. Bernard Shaw's phrase that "the hundred per cent. American was 95 per cent. village idiot" had something to do with the change.

Even Mr. McAdoo, with wet finger outstretched to feel how the wind of popular feeling is blowing, has begun to trim his sails to the coming breeze, for he had the impudence recently to speak for freedom and the Constitution—he, the colleague of the man who did more to violate the Constitution and assassinate freedom in America than any other man living or dead.

I will not argue about Mr. McAdoo's chances of be-

ing selected as the Democratic candidate. He may or he may not be; he stands no more chance of being elected as next President than I do, and that's not saying much.

There are millions of people in America who want something better than is offered them as yet for President—something better than Wood, the representative of Wall Street, or even Hiram Johnson, the representative, I am told, of the bankers and railroads and financial interests of the Pacific Coast.

What about La Follette for President? He is about the ablest man in the Senate, and he has stood consistently for the rights of the people against this capitalist despotism, with its smut-hounds and spy-hounds and licensed grafters. He is worth studying, this sturdy little American who fights consistently for the right and for high ideals. Though short he is built like a pocket Hercules with massive, broad shoulders and leonine head. The impression he makes is of frank courage and straight-forwardness.

His book entitled "La Follette's Autobiography," which is really a personal narrative of his political experiences, gives us most of the facts about him that we need to form a fair judgment.

It is informative, but not intimate; yet the man himself is so sincere that something of his spirit can be inferred from the record of what he did.

The growth of any soul must be studied in youth; and a young man reveals himself in his admirations. Henry George's book, "Progress and Poverty," seems to have been the most important formative influence in La Follette's early life; though one-sided, the spirit of it was excellent, and George's sympathy with the workman and



his poverty appears to have influenced La Follette profoundly.

A Chief Justice Ryan made a speech to the graduating class at Madison, Wis., in 1873, just before La Follette entered the University, which seems to have carried the youth off his feet; the Chief Justice said:

"For the first time in our politics, money is taking the field as an organised power. . . .

"Already, here at home, one great corporation has trifled with the sovereign power and insulted the State. There is grave fear that it, and its great rival, have confederated to make partition of the State and share it as spoils. . . .

"The question will arise, and arise in your day, though perhaps not fully in mine, 'Which shall rule—wealth or man; which shall lead—money or intellect; who shall fill public stations—educated and patriotic free men, or the serfs of corporate capital?' "

According to Woodrow Wilson, we are already the mere serfs of capital.

The President of the State University then was John Bascom, whom La Follette compares to Emerson "as a source of constant inspiration." He quotes advice of Bascom's, which is worth repeating. "Robert," he said to La Follette, who at that time was Governor of the State, "you will doubtless make mistakes of judgment as Governor, but never mind the political mistakes, so long as you make no ethical mistakes."

When La Follette was elected to Congress in 1884, at twenty-nine years of age, he was the youngest member of that body; but he had already fought the capitalist system. He says he knew nothing of the underlying forces

that controlled, and still control, the whole political machine; but he had been elected in spite of them, and he soon learned their power.

La Follette wanted to get on the Committee on Public Lands; there were many land-grant projects pending, and he thought he'd like to grapple with the legal questions involved; but he had expressed his Radical views too openly, and, to his disappointment, he was assigned to the Committee on Indian Affairs. But there, too, he developed "foolish sentimental" objections to robbing the Indians, and so came again into direct conflict with Capital.

Early in his career he opposed a railway bill, by which a railway was to get Indian lands for town sites and terminals, and then he learned how the interests all fight for easy graft.

Then in 1886 he made himself a marked man by speaking against the "pork-barrel" bill for river and harbour appropriations. It is a little astonishing to learn that this speech of La Follette was favourably noticed in the editorial columns of the *New York Tribune* and *Sun*. Today the capitalist journals are under more efficient discipline.

As La Follette had been elected to Congress without the help of the machine and by the people alone, he determined to keep the ordinary people informed of all his doings and sayings. Accordingly, he began to send out broadcast, copies of his speeches, together with explanatory notes elucidating this or that point. He complains that this "kept him poor"; but it has certainly done him an infinity of good, and at least has kept him independent of the political "machine."

When he was Governor he wiped out the whole system

“of ‘pull’ in State offices,” and he can now declare with truth that “there is less patronage-mongering in Wisconsin than in any other State in the Union.”

Those who wish, can read the whole story of the honest man as American politician set forth in precise detail in this “Autobiography.” It is sufficient here to state that the corruption is more open, just as the sums of money involved are far larger, than anything known in Europe. The situation is well summed up by Bryce in his “American Commonwealth.”

“The doors of Congress are besieged by a whole army of commercial and railroad men and their agents, to whom, since they have come to form a sort of profession, the name of “lobbyists” is given. Many Congressmen are personally interested, and lobby for themselves among their colleagues from the vantage ground of their official positions. Thus a vast deal of solicitation and bargaining goes on. . . .

“That the capitol and the hotels at Washington are a nest of intrigues and machinations, while Congress is sitting, is admitted on all hands; how many of the members are *tainted*, no one can tell.”

According to La Follette, nine out of every ten Congressmen are tainted—to say nothing worse. He sums up:

“There can be no compromise with these moneyed interests that seek to control the Government; either they or the people will rule.”

We know now that capital rules as undisputed despot. But certain mitigating powers were created, thanks to La Follette and those like him. A National Bureau of Labour was formed that collects and disseminates information on all labour matters, and a Department of

Agriculture that renders much the same benefit to the large farming communities.

But, after all, these are only slight mitigating influences, just as the Interstate Commerce Commission, which dates from 1887 and regulates railway freight, is a mere lenitive.

The truth is that President Wilson should have nationalised the railways and the telegraph and telephone services when he had them taken over by the State; they are public utilities, and should be administered for the public benefit and not for profit, and still less for the purposes of speculative gambling and graft.

La Follette, I believe, sees this, as every European statesman of position sees it and admits it in private, if not in public. Fancy cut-throat competition between the railways of a country and the canals, when both should work together for the common good! The railways of Great Britain put the canals out of use, though everyone knows the canals afford infinitely cheaper transportation for heavy freight that is not pressed for time. In Germany, with State railways, the canal system was enormously developed, and helped the prodigious growth of German industry in the two decades preceding the world-war.

When I met La Follette, I found him singularly open-minded and fair, eager to consider economic questions on their merits, willing to change or modify cherished opinions because of new light—transparently honest and sincere, with the driving power of an almost youthful enthusiasm. He believes in democracy, though he does not shut his eyes to the fact that the majority of voters do not govern America, but a handful of moneyed interests. The evil is daily growing worse, one points out;

capital here is striving, through the Attorneys General and corrupt judges, to enslave labour; but La Follette cries out: "The reactionaries will fail; we are sound at heart; America will yet lead the world."

I wish I could believe it; but the long imprisonment of Debs and Jim Larkin have shaken my optimistic faith even in American democracy.

As I have pointed out, time and again, capital is the vilest and worst despot yet set up among men. After all, the worst Czar or Kaiser is human. Nero and Nick, young and old, have their weaknesses, and can be swayed sometimes to mercy and generosity; but capital is pitiless, inhuman, and degraded to a low and sordid aim. The government of the United States in these last years is the worst known in recorded time. Tsar Nicholas did a good deal for art; the Soviet have done more: what has our Government done? "Windy Bill," as I called the Kaiser twenty years ago, did a great deal for German industries; our Government has done less than nothing for good in any department of life. And still La Follette is hopeful, and fronts the future with high courage and smiling eyes.

## XIV.

### MEMORIES OF MARK TWAIN

**I** WONDER why it is that I cannot force myself to like Mark Twain? I have never even told of my meetings with him, but I intend to do it now.

I remember when his "Gilded Age" came out, and soon afterwards his "Innocents Abroad." I had hoped great things from him when I read the "Gilded Age," with its exposure of the corruption in the Kansas legislature. A few years later I met him, and thereafter all my interest in him vanished.

It was in Heidelberg. I was a member of the Anglo-American Literary Society when Mark Twain in the eighteen-seventies came to that city. I was chosen, one of two, to call upon him and ask him to address us.

My friend's name was, I think, Waldstein, brother of Sir Charles Waldstein; I am not certain; at any rate, two of us went and saw Twain in his hotel. He met us in a very friendly, human way, and promised to come and speak at one of our meetings if the evening could be settled to suit him. We told him we would make the necessary arrangements. He offered us cigars, and during our talk I told him how I had liked his "Gilded Age," and how I liked Bret Harte. Thereupon, to our astonishment, he began inveighing against Bret Harte. "His talent," if you please, "was infinitely exaggerated, and he was not honest. He was a disgrace to literature, and had no real genius. He had cheated his publishers



out of money. Had we never heard the story?"

I shrugged my shoulders. It did not matter to me whom Bret Harte had cheated. I knew that the man who had written "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" was throned in my admiration for ever, and I ventured to say that there was one piece of character-drawing in it that was superb. When the gambler, Oakhurst, realised that he and the other outcasts were about to be caught in the winter snow, he makes up his mind that it is too late to try and wake the camp, and goes quietly to sleep. Bret Harte says: "Life at best was to him an uncertain sort of game, and he recognised the usual percentage in favour of the dealer."

I found exquisite humour in this and in Bret Harte's parodies, but Mark Twain would not have it. He became angry at once, declared that he did not care what a man wrote; a writer should pay his debts and be as honest as anybody else. "Bret Harte had played a disgraceful trick once on his publishers. They had fixed a price for a book of his at, say, \$3000 or \$5000, the book to contain 100,000 words. Bret Harte wrote to them, saying that the book was well under way, and asked them for a payment on account. The publishers sent him a payment on account, and did not hear from him for months. Finally they wrote to him about the book. He told them he would finish the book at once if he could rely on prompt payment. The publishers assured him that he would have a cheque as soon as they received the manuscript. A couple of weeks later they did receive what purported to be the manuscript, with a letter from Bret Harte begging for the money, as he was in dire need. Thereupon the publishers sent the cheque, without even opening the parcel. When they did open it, they dis-

covered that only about the first twenty pages of the book were there; the whole of the rest of the parcel was made up of letters and stray scraps of paper, and that was all the book they ever got out of Bret Harte.

"I told the publishers," Mark Twain concluded, "that they ought to have him put in prison. A man should be honest, above everything."

I ventured something about artists being insufficiently paid and getting anything but good treatment for supreme effort, but that brought no response from Twain. He declared that they did not need to write unless they wanted to; they could make shoes or do manual labour of some sort.

When we, the two envoys, came away we looked at each other. I was hurt to the soul. I said to my friend: "I never want to see that man again; never again do I want to talk with him. Fancy his running down Bret Harte on such paltry grounds!"

"At any rate," replied my friend, "he is going to speak for us, and so our mission has been successful."

"He may speak for you," I said, "but I won't be present at the meeting; I never want to hear his voice again; that is the man who thought 'The Jumping Frog' funny."

About a year before his death, I saw him at a garden party of King Edward. He walked across the lawn, all in white, with the American Ambassador, who beckoned to me, but I drew out of the way; I did not want to meet Twain.

A friend of mine in Virginia once sent me a copy of his "Joan of Arc," and asked me to read it. He told me it was a great book. I told him I would certainly read

it; it was a theme that commended itself to me; only a great man could do it justice; if Mark Twain had done it justice, I would never speak against him again, or write against him.

Well, I sat down and read it. I knew it must be one of two things: either it was one of the books of the world or it was worse than worthless; whoever realises Joan of Arc, makes her flaming soul live for us, will have done an extraordinary piece of work. For the chroniclers have told of no fault or flaw in her; she is almost inhuman in perfectness; her soul sways between two poles—one the belief in her “Spirits” and in the heavens that open again and again for her, the other, the flame of her patriotism outraged by the vile acts of wandering bands of English brigands who called themselves soldiers—the fair land of France lying like a virgin outraged by brutes. Being a Frenchwoman, Joan can talk about sex-things, and does so talk to a captain, who thinks she would make a good wife to him; she tells him boldly she would want “two sons—one to be Pope, and the other Cæsar.” A great French spirit, if ever there was one. Fortunately, we have a record of her trial, where her greatness of mind and perfect sincerity of soul are shown again and again.

But Mark Twain makes a Puritan maiden of the great Frenchwoman. It is to me a dreadful book. I have never written about Anatole France’s attempt to paint Joan of Arc. He was not able to do it. Strange to say, no one has done as good a thing as Sainte Beuve, but the worst I have ever read is certainly this long, idiotic book of Mark Twain’s.

The other day another friend praised another book of

Mark Twain's to me; told me that it would give me his pessimism, the bold way he accepted the inscrutability of life and the riddle of man's existence.

The book begins with a long essay on "What is Man?" in which Twain represents the human being as a sort of machine moved by self-interest and no other motive. "Love, charity, compassion, benevolence, all the various words for self-sacrifice are nothing but camouflage; self-gratification is the sole impulse which dictates and compels a man's every act." Twain calls this placing before us "a system of plain facts that can take the cheerfulness out of life."

The next thing in the book is the story of the unexpected death of his daughter Jean, who died in the morning of December 24, 1909. They parted as usual the night before. The servant Katy entered in the morning to him with the words: "Miss Jean is dead."

He has written half a dozen pages on it that are very good, very sincere, and in their hopelessness desperately pathetic. On the day of the funeral he writes:

"Jean's coffin stands where her mother and I stood, forty years ago, and were married; and where Susy's coffin stood thirteen years ago; where her mother's stood five years and a half ago; and where mine will stand after a little time."

His last word is:

"Now Jean is in her grave—if I can believe it. God rest her sweet spirit!"

All that is manifestly sincere, I think; but it is commonplace. No great word in it; no realisation even of what the "sweet spirit" meant to him.

Lessing once wrote a letter on the death of his young son, half a dozen lines that go deeper than Mark Twain's

ten pages. Lessing says: "How wise he was, the little fellow, to leave this world so early, before he had time to taste its bitter agony!"

Then comes essay after essay almost impossible to read: "The Turning Point of My Life," an attempt to prove that there is no turning-point, that every act is a turning-point. Then a long essay on "How to Make History Dates Stick," an appalling thing, with child's illustrations through it—an absolutely terrifying piece of stupidity. Then "The Memorable Assassination"—the assassination of the Empress of Austria, which could only be made memorable by a realisation of the woman. No one who did not know her could possibly write anything worth while about her. On the surface, she was a poor creature who abandoned her high calling to go hunting and amusing herself in foreign lands. Twain had no business to write a word about her, for he knew nothing of her; yet this is the sort of piffle he writes:

"She was so blameless, the Empress; and so beautiful, in mind and heart, in person and spirit; and whether with a crown upon her head or without it and nameless, a grace to the human race, and almost a justification of its creation; *would* be, indeed, but that the animal that struck her down re-establishes the doubt."

What snobbish piffle! Then I come to an essay on William Dean Howells, in which that tedious person is praised as if he were one of the great writers. Mark Twain says he read Howells' "Venetian Days" forty years ago, and for forty years his English had been a continual delight and astonishment. Well, I too read his "Venetian Days" forty years ago, and made up my mind then and there that there was nothing in Howells for me.

At length I come to the most famous of Twain's essays, "Is Shakespeare Dead?"

I should not have written one word about Twain had not this essay revived my memory of him, because he has used it as a vehicle to depreciate Bret Harte.

He declares that anyone can tell whether a man has learned the terms of a trade by hearsay or by practice; whether, in other words, he has been there or not. He says: "I have been a quartz miner, and know all about it, but whenever Bret Harte introduces that industry into a story, the first time that a miner opens his mouth we know from his phrasing that Harte got the phrasing by listening, like Shakespeare—I mean the Stratford one—and not by experience."

This seems so important to him that he goes on to repeat it:

"I have been a surface miner—gold—and I know all its mysteries, and the dialect that belongs with them; and whenever Harte introduces that industry into a story I know that neither he nor they (*sic!*) have ever served that trade."

Now this may all be true without being of any worth, but his whole argument is based on it. A lot of lawyers say that Shakespeare used law terms with knowledge of the trade; therefore he must have been a lawyer, and not a poet. Mark Twain seems incapable of seeing the plain *non sequitur* in his argument. He is not a lawyer, therefore he cannot judge of Shakespeare's use of law-terms except from hearsay, from what lawyers tell him, and he does not allow for the patriotic snobbishness that has dominated England for the last fifty or sixty years on this matter. My friend, Professor Churton Collins, tried to prove to me once that Shakespeare was a master



of Latin and Greek, though I had little difficulty in convincing him that he was mistaken.

A little reflection would dispose of Twain's argument in this interminable screed on Shakespeare, that is spread over about eighty pages. Everyone in Shakespeare's time used law terms with some knowledge, because law and the quibbles of law constituted at that time the favourite topic of conversation, just as politics do to-day. It was dangerous to talk politics under Queen Elizabeth, even more dangerous than to talk politics in the United States under Wilson, and accordingly cautious people ruled it out of their conversation and talked law instead.

When Mark Twain decided that the Stratford Shakespeare did not write the plays and that Bacon did, he wrote himself down a bad critic as carefully as he could in fair long-hand. One point is always conclusive to me: Bacon was a good Latinist, wrote the "*Novum Organum*" in Latin. Every tag of Latin used by Shakespeare comes from one little school-book, "*Sententiæ Pueriles*," or the *Elementary Latin Grammar*, and when the printer of those childish compilations makes misprints, as he does twice, Shakespeare copies them. Much the same thing is true of Shakespeare's French and Bacon's.

The other day Mencken told me that my judgment of Mark Twain, in his opinion, was too severe. "Huckleberry Finn" he thought a good boys' book, and "The Mysterious Stranger" was a real achievement. I had not read "Huckleberry Finn" since I was a boy myself, so I got it and read it, and "The Mysterious Stranger" to boot. I do not think "Huckleberry Finn" among the best boys' books. "Treasure Island" of Stevenson seems to me infinitely better than anything Mark Twain has

done in this way; and one rather doubts whether "Treasure Island" is going to live.

I took "The Mysterious Stranger" and read it carefully. I cannot say how bad I think it. Take the opening, the first three lines: "It was in 1590—winter. Austria was far away from the world and asleep; it was still the Middle Ages in Austria, and promised to remain so for ever."

Saying that "it was still the Middle Ages in Austria" shows that the whole thing is fake and wakes you up out of any illusion, and the following sentence simply emphasises the disillusion. Turn to the beginning of the next page and again take the first three lines of it: "The three boys were always together and had been from the cradle, fond of one another from the beginning." What absolute silliness! Untrue, unthinkable. I turn the page and read: "He always kept coffee by him to drink himself and also to astonish the ignorant with."

Is it necessary to say that this "with" in the air is absolutely bad writing?

Yet Mencken insists "The Mysterious Stranger" is fine, because it shows Mark Twain's absolute disbelief in things. The Mysterious Stranger, or Satan, as he is elsewhere called, writes, according to Mencken, the true truth. Here is a phrase of his:

"Speaking as an expert, I know that ninety-nine out of a hundred of your race were strongly against the killing of witches when that foolishness was first agitated by a handful of pious fanatics in the long ago. And I know that even to-day, after the ages of transmitted prejudice and silly teaching, only one person puts any real heart into the harrying of a witch."

This only shows that the Devil knew very little about

history or human nature. When witches were being killed or tortured, nine men out of ten really believed in them as enemies of religion, as the vilest beings in the world, just as you meet good Americans to-day, especially, I believe, in the League, who believe that all Bolsheviks and thinkers are enemies of mankind, whom it would be a good thing to harry, persecute, or even murder.

The end of the story does show Mark Twain's scepticism, but it is almost precisely the same as that of Schopenhauer; might almost be a translation from him, except that I think Schopenhauer put it a little better:

"No sane man can be happy, for to him life is real, and he sees what a fearful thing it is. Only the mad can be happy, and not many of those. The few that imagine themselves kings or gods are happy, the rest are no happier than the sane. Of course, no man is entirely in his right mind at any time, but I have been referring to the extreme cases."

On almost the last page he does reach a phrase, that "life itself is only a vision, a dream"; but he soon drifts into stuff like this:

"Strange! that you should not have suspected years ago, centuries, ages, eons ago!—for you have existed, companionless, through all the eternities. Strange, indeed, that you should not have suspected that your universe and its contents were only dreams, vision, fiction! Strange, because they are so frankly and hysterically insane—like all dreams; a God who could make good children as easily as bad, yet preferred to make bad ones; who could have made every one of them happy, yet never made a single happy one; who made them prize their bitter life, yet stingily cut it short; who gave his angels

eternal happiness unearned, yet required his other children to earn it; who gave his angels painless lives, yet cursed his other children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body; who mouths justice and invented hell—mouths mercy and invented hell—mouths Golden Rules and forgiveness multiplied by seven times seven, and invented hell; who mouths morals to other people and has none himself; who frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all; who created man without invitation, then tries to shuffle the responsibility for man's acts upon man, instead of honourably placing it where it belongs, upon himself; and finally, with altogether divine obtuseness, invites this poor, abused slave to worship him! . . .”

All this is a mere attack on Christian dogma, and shows that Twain has no understanding of the deeper scepticism of our times, that tosses aside all religions and questions not only the truths of science, but even the affirmations of mathematics.

I understand that someone has written a biography recently, pointing out that Mark Twain was subservient to his wife and all her New England conventions, and that this hindered him from doing his best work. No such excuse can be pleaded in the High Court of Letters. A man has either done great work or has not; if he has done it, it will be recognised in time and he will have his place in the Pantheon; if he has not done it, no might-have-beens will help him. I often say, genius does what it must, talent what it can, and the vast majority go after the pig-nuts.

But is this all the truth about Mark Twain? Was he not a great humorist? Is not “A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur” wildly, screamingly funny? Have not some of his witticisms gone into the language?

I do not pretend to have exhausted Twain: the other day Shaw wrote to me that I underrated him: "Mark Twain had humour in him," he says, and no doubt Shaw is right in this respect; but, speaking for myself, I simply cannot read him with any patience; his humour seems, to me, forced and unnatural; and his most recent biographer, I really believe, has explained correctly his extraordinary shallowness of soul. Like all small men, he wanted success in the day and hour, and was willing to pay the price for it. He wrote for the market, and the million praised and paid him; he had a gorgeous and easy life, and was a friend of millionaires, and went about at the end like a glorified Hall Caine; but he wrote nothing lifeworthy, not a word that has a chance of living except his boys' books, "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn," which may live for a generation, or perhaps even two, with "Treasure Island." It amused me to see, the other day, that Swinburne classed Mark Twain with Martin Tupper; that's about his true place.

## XV

### MEETINGS WITH MAXIM GORKI

**I**T is fortunate for a writer to-day to be born a Russian. All over Europe he is accepted at once at his full value, and not seldom beyond it. Would Kuprin, or even Tchekov, have ever been known if they had been born in Germany or America? Gorki is known all over the world, mainly because he was badly treated in America, and not for any marvellous talent in his stories or essays; for it would be easy, I think, to prove that O. Henry, without being a great master, was easily Gorki's superior.

I have just read some hundreds of pages of his "Autobiography"; there is a portrait of his beloved "grandmother" in it that reminds one of Goethe's picture of his grandmother in "Wahrheit und Dichtung"; but at the end you find that you have got nothing of extraordinary value out of the book. It is good Dutch painting of poverty-stricken Russian home-life; but nothing remarkable, no revelation of character, no gleam of unearthly light to give his picture enduring significance.

There is a scene where "the little Gipsy," so-called, dances at night in the cabin while an Uncle plays the guitar; the youth dances as one possessed, and of a sudden they call on the Grandmother, and she too goes to the floor and begins to dance. The music of the guitar, we are told, fills these strange creatures, old and young alike, with deep pity for all suffering and "pity for



themselves" and their untoward fate; tears fall, even from the children, and sadness reigns. Then they all begin drinking, and even the youngest gets a small glass of sweet liquor, and soon, we are told, "a sense of happiness and well-being fills all hearts, and they begin to sing gay nonsense-verses!"

The whole picture is intimately characteristic; but we are all familiar with such scenes from Russia, and I confess that I am rather puzzled by the old Grandfather, the head of the household, who, on a mere pretext, takes his little grandchild and beats him with a rod till the little fellow faints and has to be nursed in bed for some weeks. It really looks as if there was a certain cruel strain inherent in that strange Russian nature, for nowhere else in the world are children beaten with such severity. This book of Gorki is interesting without being eventful. Yet it is praised, and his name is on every reader's tongue throughout Christendom, as if he were among the Immortals!

"Lucky fellow!" I say, in spite of the fact that he is in a Sanatorium at Saarow, and afflicted with tuberculosis. Saarow is three hours away from Berlin; but as soon as I heard that Gorki understands and speaks Italian, I made arrangements to go to see him. A Russian author and friend, named Ignatief, undertook to bring us together, and one bitter morning Scheffauer and I met him at 11 o'clock and set off.

Saarow is really a summer resort, and famous for pine woods surrounding a beautiful lake. But, on arriving, the cold air told us that it was lunch-time, and accordingly we lunched in the restaurant at the station. The food was good, the Moselle excellent, and one dollar paid for all that the three of us could eat and drink. Then

we walked through the pine woods, with snow feathering the dark branches, while the sun was sinking, a red wafer. Somehow or other the sombre pines and snow and the setting sun suggested Death, and we all walked silently, as though oppressed.

The Sanatorium is a fine building, and a few moments after we entered, a pretty girl came down the stairs and told us that M. Gorki would see us. Up we went a flight of stairs, and into a small reception-room. The girl who had conducted us disappeared through a door to the left, and a moment or two afterwards I was astonished by the apparition of Maxim Gorki.

In spite of all I had read of him and about him, his appearance astounded me. Just as I had always pictured Tolstoi to myself as tall and majestic-looking, only to find that he was small and squat, so I had imagined Gorki as short and strong, and before me there is a slight, agile figure of fully six feet in height. With a word of greeting in Russian to Ignatief, Gorki turned and preceded us into his sitting-room: he might be the German Kaiser, I think to myself.

As I enter, he is already seated, and motions me with casual hand to a chair. While he talks Russian to Ignatief, I set myself to realise him. He is very carelessly dressed in a bluish woollen sweater that covers him from chin to hips. His hair is brown, tinged with grey; he is clean-shaven; his face is extraordinarily irregular; never was there a narrower forehead or higher cheekbones; yet the face is expressive, and the eyes and chin at least normal. He is spectre thin, yet quick and abrupt in every movement; every now and then the short, barking cough of the consumptive shakes him. While Ignatief is translating his Russian into German for us,

Gorki drums with his fingers on the table impatiently.

The reception begins to appeal to my sense of humour: here we are, Scheffauer, Ignatief, and myself, all three writers of some standing, and here a Russian *moujik*, with certainly no more talent than Scheffauer, treats us as if we were importunate beggars at the feet of royalty.

I am inclined to smile at his rudeness, but restrain myself, remembering that Gorki has had good reason to distrust and dislike Americans, and especially American writers, who in his need left him to be torn by the Philistines.

Ignatief tells me that Gorki says he will have a lady on Monday or Tuesday who can translate Russian into English easily and scrupulously.

"Will he not speak Italian with me?" I ask. Ignatief translates; Gorki, still drumming on the table with his right hand, answers curtly: "Nyet! Nyet!"

The Kaiser would be more polite!

I believe there is some mistake, so I launch into Italian: "I've just read your 'Memories of Childhood,' Signor Gorki," I began, "and was infinitely interested in the pictures you give of Russian home-life; but were there no neighbours, no boys and girls outside the family, whom you came to know? Was there no sex-life, or at least childish curiosity?"

I could be sworn he understood me; for his eyes fixed me, and his expressive face showed that he was considering the point raised in my question; but instead of answering me in Italian, he turned again to Ignatief and spoke decisively in Russian. "Gorki says," Ignatief translated, "that he cannot speak Italian; on Monday or Tuesday a lady will be here who is a perfect interpreter."

It seemed to me clear that Gorki misunderstood us and

the object of our visit; why importune him longer? I had heard on good authority that he had been plagued by American interviewers, who wanted him to condemn the Bolshevik régime, which he had declined to do. He was evidently suspicious and distrustful. After all, we had no business to intrude, we of the detested race. Yet I would make one more trial. I turned to Ignatief: "Is Gorki going on with his autobiography? If so, I'd like to know if he intends to tell his love-stories frankly?" After another effort at translation, "Gorki," I was told, "intended to continue his 'Life's Story,' but would not use any great frankness."

At once I rose, excusing myself; Gorki seemed surprised, but Scheffauer and myself went out forthwith; Ignatief remained behind a little longer.

Gorki seemed surprised at my abrupt exit, came after us, and assured us that in a few days he would have a wonderful interpreter—an English girl, with perfect knowledge of Russian: "would we come again?"

I looked at him, smiling. To me there was something of the *moujik* in the man, something uncultured, common. "Please tell him," I said to Ignatief, "that I am fully repaid for the six hours' travel by this wonderful interview!" And away I went, my resolution to go without more ado at least as plain, I hope, as Gorki's impatience with us.

On our way back to Berlin, even Scheffauer gave up the attempt to defend Gorki's inexplicable rudeness, but I remembered that when Gorki had recorded his talks with Tolstoi, he had shown himself annoyed by Tolstoi's frequent use of indecent words, even though he had to admit that they were the best words, "the exact words." The incident is worth recalling, for it paints both men.

"When Tolstoi liked," Gorki said, "he could be extraordinarily charming, sensitive, and tactful; his talk was fascinatingly simple and elegant, *but sometimes* it was painfully unpleasant to listen to him. I always disliked what he said about women—it was unspeakably 'vulgar,' and there was in his words something artificial, insincere, and at the same time very personal. It seemed as if he had once been hurt, and could neither forget nor forgive. The evening when I first got to know him, he took me into his study—it was at Khamovniki, in Moscow—and, making me sit opposite to him, began to talk about 'Varienka Oliessova' and of 'Twenty-Six and One.' (Stories by Gorki.) I was overwhelmed by his tone and lost my head, he spoke so plainly and brutally, arguing that in a healthy girl chastity is not natural. 'If a girl who has turned fifteen is healthy, she desires to be touched and embraced. Her mind is still afraid of the unknown and of what she does not understand—that is what they call chastity and purity. But her flesh is already aware that the incomprehensible is right, lawful, and, in spite of the mind, it demands fulfilment of the law. Now, you describe 'Varienka Oliessova' as healthy, but her feelings are anæmic—that is not true to life.'"

"Then he began to speak about the girl in 'Twenty-Six and One,' using a stream of indecent words with a simplicity which seemed to me cynical, and even offended me. Later I came to see that he used unmentionable words only because he found them more precise and pointed, but at the time it was unpleasant to me to listen to him. I made no reply, and suddenly he became attentive and kindly, and began asking me about my life, what I was studying, and what I read."

Plainly Gorki had thought that Tolstoi as a *barin* and



aristocrat was presuming on the fact that he was a peasant and, as such, deserved no consideration, though it was sun-clear that Tolstoi had no such snobbish feeling. It had interested me intensely to find that Tolstoi, the religious enthusiast, a sort of Christian father born out of due time, was in so far a Pagan and in full sympathy with my longing for frank speech.

After meeting Gorki, I had the true explanation: "Gorki," I said to myself, "is still enough of a peasant to suspect the civility of sincere speech, and that alone shows him to be a smaller mind than one supposed. Besides, his 'Childhood' was too long: effects were reached by wearisome repetition": in fine, I was "fed up" with Gorki, and intended to put him out of my mind.

A few days later I met MacBride, the Russian sympathiser and correspondent, and as soon as he heard me speak contemptuously of Gorki, he burst out that I must meet Gorki again, that at heart he was a good fellow, and deserved to be better known; and finally told me that on his first meeting with Gorki he had had a very similar experience, and at length told Gorki's wife that if Gorki didn't care to talk, he (MacBride) had no wish to press him, "in fact, didn't give a whoop in Hell one way or the other!" At the next meeting, he said, "Gorki was human and very pleasant."

The end of it all was that MacBride wrote to Gorki and soon received a reply that Gorki had been really ill, but would be glad to meet me again and talk freely. Bit by bit, MacBride conquered my natural reluctance to spend another long, cold day in order to do justice to the *moujik*, as I always called Gorki to myself; and one morning we set off together to visit Gorki again at Saarow.



This time a fine-looking girl, who spoke excellent English (learnt in Cambridge) as well as Russian, met us at the door and took us upstairs. Gorki held out his hand to me, and smiled all over his face at MacBride, who was evidently a *persona grata*, and we all sat down for a talk.

I told the interpreter that I wanted to know from Gorki whether Tolstoi always used indecent language. Gorki nodded his head energetically, and said that "Tolstoi always spoke as unconstrainedly as even a peasant would when talking in anger or intimacy, and Russian is very rich in indecent expressions."

"But yourself," I went on, "why don't you follow his example? Even in 'Childhood' there's not a word to shock an English prude; why?"

Gorki shrugged his shoulders: "I don't care to do it; everyone would put it down to my peasant upbringing or ignorance."

I had divined rightly: some of the peasant earth still stuck to him and hampered his mentality.

"You told Tolstoi," I began, "of your adventure with General Kornet's wife?" "Surely," he replied. "There you speak plainly enough," I said; "did that please Tolstoi?"

"Oh," cried Gorki, "he used much worse words than I did," and he smiled at the interpreter and shrugged his shoulders most expressively.

Here is Gorki's story and Tolstoi's comment on it:

"When I lived in Kazan, I entered the service of General Kornet's wife as doorkeeper and gardener. She was a Frenchwoman, a General's widow, a young woman, fat, and with the tiny feet of a little girl. Her eyes were amazingly beautiful, restless, and always greedily alert.

Before her marriage she was, I think, a huckstress or a cook, or possibly even a woman of the town. She would get drunk early in the morning and come out in the yard or garden, dressed only in a chemise with an orange-coloured gown over it, in Tartar slippers made of morocco, and on her head a mane of thick hair. Her hair, carelessly done, hung about her red cheeks and shoulders. A young witch! She used to walk about the garden, humming French songs and watching me work, and every now and then she would go to the kitchen window and call: 'Pauline, give me something.'

" 'Something' always meant the same thing—a glass of wine with ice in it.

"In the basement of her house there lived three young ladies, the Princesses D. G., whose mother was dead and whose father, a Commissariat-General, had gone off elsewhere. General Kornet's widow took a dislike to the girls, and tried to get rid of them by doing every kind of offensive thing to them. She spoke Russian badly, but swore superbly. I very much disliked her attitude towards these harmless girls—they looked so sad, frightened, and defenceless. One afternoon two of them were walking in the garden, when suddenly the General's widow appeared, drunk as usual, and began to shout at them, to drive them out of the garden. They began walking silently away, but the General's widow stood in the gateway, completely blocking it with her body, like a cork, and started swearing at them and using Russian words like a regular drayman. I asked her to stop swearing and let the girls go out, but she shouted: 'You, I know you! You get through their window at night.'

"I was angry, and, taking her by the shoulders, pushed her away from the gate; but she broke away, and, facing

me, quickly undid her dress, lifted up her chemise, and shouted: 'I'm nicer than those rats.'

"Then I lost my temper. I took her by the neck, turned her round, and struck her with my shovel below the back, so that she skipped out of the gate and ran across the yard, crying out three times in great surprise: 'O! O! O!'

"After that, I got my passport from her confidant, Pauline—also a drunken, but very wily woman—took my bundle under my arm, and left the place; and the General's widow, standing at the window with a red shawl in her hand, shouted: 'I won't call the police—it's all right—listen—come back—don't be afraid.'

"Tolstoi," Gorki tells us, "laughed until he cried over this tale, and got a pain in his side and groaned and kept on crying out in a thin scream: 'With the shovel! On the bottom with the shovel, eh? Right on the bottom! Was it a broad shovel?'"

Then, after a pause, he said seriously: "It was generous in you to strike her like that; any other man would have struck her on the head for that. Very generous! You understood that she wanted you?"

"I don't remember," Gorki replied. "I hardly think that I can have understood."

"Well now! But it's obvious. Of course she wanted you."

"I did not live for that then."

"Whatever you may live for, it's all the same. You are evidently not much of a lady's man. Anyone else in your place would have made his fortune out of the situation, would have become a landed proprietor, and have ended by making one of a pair of drunkards."

The comment is of a great artist; and it is no wonder

that Tolstoi went on: "You are funny—don't be offended—very funny. And it's very strange that you should still be good-natured when you might well be spiteful. . . . You're strong . . . that's good. . . ."

And, after another silence, he added thoughtfully: "Your mind I don't understand—it's a very tangled mind—but your heart is sensitive . . . yes, a sensible kindly heart."

To sum up, Gorki finds Tolstoi "a cruel rationalist despite all his pleasant little phrases," and Tolstoi thinks Gorki "very bookish," and predicts "it's bad and will stand in your way."

Tolstoi declares plainly that, when young, he was an indefatigable "pursuer of women"—only, instead of this paraphrase, Gorki tells us he used "a salty peasant word," and confesses that "it was silly" of him ever to have been offended by Tolstoi's indecent expressions.

Here is Tolstoi for the first time painted in "his habit as he lived": this is the artist Tolstoi, the man whom Turgénief admired. Everyone must remember how Turgénief, in one of the last letters he ever wrote, begged Tolstoi to stop preaching and dedicate himself to his art, and give the Russian people two or three more deathless novels. . . . I regret that Tolstoi did not follow the good advice. And, incidentally, Gorki discovers himself, especially in refusing to see that the frank indecencies of speech were Tolstoi's very soul—the artist in him driving to ruthless expression.

When I asked Gorki why he did not profit by Tolstoi's example and write at least his autobiography simply and truthfully, he merely replied that it didn't seem to him necessary to go beyond the conventional. "After all," he concluded, "Tolstoi only used complete frankness in

private; in his books he observes the conventional limits."

"But," I continued, "you have written with terrible frankness of Russian cruelty, why not of Russian love-making?"

"I hate cruelty," Gorki burst out, "it makes me doubt everything; all my life I have asked: How does cruelty come to be? out of what hidden hideous instinct does this devilish lust arise? How can men find pleasure in torturing other men? Yet in Russia both the 'Reds' and the 'Whites' torture their victims to death with diabolic ingenuity!"

I had no explanation to give, for the same revolt against cruelty, and the same shuddering wonder at its prevalence, have tortured my heart since boyhood. Cruelty always appears to me worse than mere ignorance—the lowest depth of depravity. I often say that every magistrate and every judge should have to pass one week in an ordinary prison as a common convict before taking a seat on the judicial bench. I am sure that in a short time prisons and punishments would be finally discredited.

Gorki told me that he had just finished the third volume of his "Autobiography," and had told a real story of first love in it; "but not with Tolstoi's frankness," he interjected, "I prefer the romantic view."

I could not help questioning him about the Bolshevik régime, and in especial about Lenin: he would not condemn the Bolsheviks, not even the Tcheka with its imprisonments and banishments and death sentences. "Every government," he said, "uses force to protect itself; why blame the Bolsheviks for doing what every Government does?"

"But no other Government," I countered, "not even the capitalist Government of the United States, has dared

to deport its own citizens. If other Governments follow the Bolshevist example in this particular, we shall have to found some new City of Refuge, or No-Man's Land, where the outlaws may take refuge."

Gorki nodded his head. "The banishments of the Russian intelligenzia since November, 1922," he admitted, "are very hard to defend; but the world is not a particularly civilised world anywhere since the war—and it is not getting better."

I told him I knew Trotzky and Tchitcherin and Rakofsky and the rest pretty well; but, though I had met Lenin, I had missed him, formed no opinion of his ability; yet, from his position and from what Tchitcherin and the other Bolshevist leaders said of him, he must be extraordinarily intelligent, as well as gifted with great strength of character.

Gorki nodded: "A fanatic of genius; he is convinced of the necessity of destroying the vast social and economic inequality of men, and is prepared to accept all means that lead to this consummation. I do not say he is right or wrong; some assert that his dream of equality is impossible; but all of us are agreed as to the evils of the present terrible inequality of conditions—starving children on the one hand, and selfish milliardaires on the other—and this urge towards equality is very Russian; and, after all, compare Lenin with your shifty opportunist, Lloyd George, or that shameless old cynic, Clemenceau, or your dreadful Wilson, who betrayed all the causes he professed to love, and Lenin shines by comparison. *The mistakes of Lenin are the mistakes of an honest, unselfish man, and history knows of no reformer who has not made mistakes. Lenin is almost alone in*



*acknowledging his blunders and in trying boldly to remedy them.*

"I sometimes try to picture to myself Lenin's vision of the new world he is striving to bring to the birth. All men in it are intelligent and humane and unselfish: everywhere are beautiful garden cities filled with majestic buildings: machines do all the work, man is at last master of himself; his physical energy is no longer spent on rough, filthy labour—it has been transformed into spiritual energy, and all his real power is directed to the investigation of the problems of life, how to diminish pain and cure disease, and make of this earthly life a divine progress to ever better and nobler conditions. The greater the man, the more daring his dreams.

"Lenin has had the courage to begin the social revolution in a country of peasants, nine out of ten of whom desire merely to become fat, comfortable bourgeois; they call him mad! Once more I sing the glory of the sacred insanity of the brave, and of these Vladimir Lenin is the most magnificently mad.

"The future must apportion to him his place in history, but I certainly can't condemn him. I can only hope for the best."

After my first visit to Russia, forty years ago, I wrote in the *London Spectator* that a new birth of religion or a new form of society would come into being in Holy Russia. After listening to Gorki on Lenin, I could not help feeling that I had written more wisely than I knew. At any rate, in this miserable Europe impoverished by war and made desolate by race-hatreds, it is not forbidden to us still to hope for redemption through noble unselfishness!

Yet, while I am transcribing Gorki's eulogy, I hesitate to praise Lenin, for I have just read how the Bolsheviks have executed Mdlle. Brussilof, the daughter of the General who, according to Trotzky himself, has done so much for the efficiency of the "Red" army. Mdlle. Brussilof's crime, it appears, consisted in hiding some church plate from the Bolsheviks, and her judges of the Tcheka informed her that, if she begged for pardon, it would be granted her on account of her father's services. She answered loftily that she would not ask or accept any favour from the blood-stained hands of the Russian revolutionaries. The next morning the heroic woman was taken out and shot.

There's a tremendous line in Shakespeare which always occurs to me when I hear Lenin praised. When Salisbury learned that King John had got rid of Arthur, he declares that he will no longer

". . . attend the foot  
That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks."

That, it seems to me, must be Lenin's final condemnation: he was more despotic than the despots.

Gorki's loathing of cruelty and his real sympathy with Lenin made me realise that he was a finer intelligence than I had at first supposed. Naturally I cannot help putting Tolstoi far above him; indeed, the more I learn of Tolstoi, the better I understand Turgénief's admiration of him: I only wish he had used what Gorki called his "indecent frankness" in his own Autobiography. But, in any case, "Anna Karénina" and "Resurrection" are enough to put him with Turgénief in the front rank of immortals for ever; and it is even probable that

Gorki's memories of him will turn out to be more important than all the rest of Gorki's writings.

At any rate, all that Gorki says of Tolstoi and of Lenin is worth remembering; and, if he sympathises more with the revolutionary leader than with the great artist, that, too, is perhaps natural in one of peasant stock in our time. My final impression of Gorki was most pleasant; as MacBride said, he is very kindly, and fair-minded to boot, and a little irritability is to be excused in one plagued with illness and an exile when past middle age.

## XVI

### OTTO KAHN AND LEON TROTZKY

#### TWO GREAT CAPTAINS

NO two men of my acquaintance are more alike than these two; both men of action rather than thought; both, therefore, to be judged by their deeds rather than by their words. Somewhat alike in appearance, too: both stocky, strong, inclined to stoutness, with shapely round heads on square shoulders; in both the features are regular and prepossessing; the eyes in both faces the distinctive trait: Trotzky's large, luminous, enthusiastic, flashing; Kahn's quieter, cooler, more reflective; both men have abrupt, quick movements; both like to talk, and both talk excellently; yet how differently Life has used them! The one a financier and millionaire banker, the other a revolutionary hero and a maker of armies who is changing the history of the world and the destinies of mankind.

Yet, if I could bring them together and make them both talk, say on railways and their management, I'd wager a good deal that the differences of opinion would tend to diminish, and that each man would soon feel a certain respect for the other's opinion. For the dominant characteristic of both men is fair-mindedness. True, at first blush, they would seem poles apart: Kahn standing for private ownership and management, and Trotzky for public ownership and public management;

but Kahn is wise enough to admit that government regulation and supervision are needed, and even profit-sharing, while Trotzky should have learned by now of his own experience that individual energy is invaluable in every department of life and industry.

Trotzky's power and practical wisdom have been demonstrated on so large a stage that they can now be taken for granted, and before I end this comparison I shall give, at least, one convincing proof of his astounding patriotism and heroic resolution.

Otto Kahn's ability must appear from what he writes: to make a great fortune in a country which has grown ten-fold in wealth in a quarter of a century is not in itself proof, though it may afford presumption of practical wisdom. But, as one reads him, one sees clearly enough that he deals with all the questions in a broad, free-minded fashion.

When he condemns our excessive income-tax on the highest incomes, he admits at the same time that "the arguments for a progressive inheritance tax are unanswerable and compelling from the social point of view."

But it is in the chapter entitled "The Task Ahead" that Kahn is seen at his best; he begins by putting his finger on the weakest spot in our domestic policy:

"I wish," he says, "we would create a Federal Department of Fine Arts, such as exists in many European countries, and place at its head a man of understanding, vision, enthusiasm, sympathy, and outstanding capacity."

Life in these States is abominably simple; there is no endowment of art or literature or science, nothing but business and material needs are taken into account by the Government, consequently all those who wish to live by

the spirit, or who try to live by it, must endure a sort of martyrdom. The richest country in the world is the poorest in the endowing of art or letters or science.

But if Kahn had been made Minister of Fine Arts by Wilson or Harding, with a tenth part of the revenue now devoted to our entirely useless army or navy, what a revolution in life and thought we should have witnessed! He would have founded Opera Houses and Conservatories of Music in every large city throughout the country; and, with Opera Houses, State Theatres and Schools of Dramatic Art. Schools of Design, too, and Modelling would have been endowed in every State capital; and who knows but a State *Journal* might have been established here and there, devoted to truth and the progress of science and art. The mind of America, and the great heart of that wonderful people, might now be fostered and cultivated, instead of merely the alimentary canal. Utopia, one may cry; but Utopia is everywhere behind the actual, only waiting to be realised; and one brave, wise spirit like Otto Kahn might transform America in a single generation: fancy an Otto Kahn instead of a William Jennings Bryan or a Billy Sunday!

Kahn is just as far-seeing and wise in what he says about the workman and his reward. He begins by speaking of him as a "collaborator with capital"; he insists that "his living conditions must be made dignified and attractive to himself and his family. Nothing," he adds, "is of greater importance." He goes on to declare that "to provide proper homes for the workers is one of the elementary duties of the large employer," and if the small employer is unable to face the expense, then it becomes "the duty of the State or community. The worker," he insists, "must be relieved of the dread



of sickness, unemployment, and old age"; he must, besides, "earn enough to have for himself, his wife and children, a share of the comforts and recreations of life, enough, too, to lay something by, and be encouraged in the practice and rewards of thrift."

Trotsky would grin at reading this description of a capitalist's Utopia; where, he would ask, has any capitalist society ever even attempted to create such a workman's heaven?

Otto Kahn faces this question too; he admits that "labour in the past has not secured a fair deal"; admits that "society has failed to do anything like its full duty to labour"; but, he adds, though "the process of rectification has not yet been completed, the work is going on apace."

"Where?" one asks in amazement—and this is my only difference with Kahn; "where, when, how?"

Never in my knowledge has such beneficent work been taken in hand by any authority, save what he calls contemptuously "the paternalistic Government of Germany." Yet the reforms inaugurated by Bismarck were carried out against and in spite of the opposition of all the capitalist interests in Germany. Where has anything ever been done by capital for labour?

That a man like Kahn can delude himself into believing that a capitalist society will ever act in the interests of the workmen, is one of the marvels of self-deception. America is the richest country in the world; the other day the capitalists plunged us into war, promising everything to the "noble boys" who went to fight for their pockets; what have the capitalists given to the soldiers, Mr. Kahn? Where is the land they promised so freely? Harding and Mellon postponed the payment

of even the small bonus they promised to the soldiers. And if in a struggle for life and death capitalists behave so meanly, what is to be hoped from them in ordinary times? Strikes, Mr. Kahn, are being prohibited; the worker in the United States is being degraded to a wage-slave; his thinking leaders are being imprisoned for opinions and deported contrary to law and in defiance of the Constitution by the creatures subservient to capital.

If Kahn had ever lived as Trotzky has lived, as an exile in poverty, in prison, he would be as convinced as Trotzky that the only hope of a decent life for the working man depends on the workman himself. Kahn sneers at Socialism, as paternalism, and talks of "the level road of Americanism," but Trotzky knows that the level road leads nowhere, and even his purblind Communistic State may yet realise some of the better economic conditions which Kahn, too, sees are desirable.

But why doesn't some Government give Kahn, or some one like him, power? Why has not this capitalist despotism of ours mobilised such a man and utilised his energy, capacity, and experience? There is not a single man in the whole Harding Cabinet of his ability and understanding; hardly one fit to be a subordinate assistant or even clerk to him. Had such a man been made Minister of Commerce, we should not have suffered from inflation and sky-high prices so long, and should by now have come to the aid of a suffering Europe. But such hopes are miserably futile. No one can see above his own head, and the impossible task for any ruler is to select a subordinate wiser than himself.

In despair I turn again to Trotzky, and I want my

readers to know the great story of his trial and triumph. When Denikin was at the height of his success, and had already pushed up almost to the gates of Moscow, Trotzky was working twenty hours a day to animate and form the Red Army to meet him.

At length, after superhuman efforts, the Red forces met Denikin's French officers and Cossacks and stopped them. A little later Trotzky received a telegram from Denikin:

"Release Generals So-and-so (mentioning half a dozen) and Colonels So-and-so (mentioning a dozen more names) and such-and-such Majors and Engineers, or I'll shoot your father and mother, captured yesterday by my forces."

Without even consulting Lenin, Trotzky replied with the one word: "Shoot!"

To Denikin's eternal disgrace, it is reported that he carried out his vile threat. But Trotzky's reply is one of the great incidents of this Soviet war for the liberation of Humanity from the despotism of the dollar.

#### A LAST TALK WITH TROTZKY

Trotzky was good enough to come to see me just before leaving New York to return to Russia. I had followed and appreciated his work in 1905-6 as a leader in the Petrograd revolution. He had escaped from Siberia and I knew that he understood conditions in Russia and the Russian character a thousand times better than I did. He was an able man, forceful, and I believed him to be an idealist and unselfish in the main, for no one in these days who is greedy becomes a Socialist.

The mere label is a disadvantage, an economic and social handicap in every country in the world.

Trotsky told me at once that he believed the time was ripe for a social revolution in Russia. I asked him how he would begin. "The most imperative need in Russia," he declared, "was to give back the land to the peasants." Even before the serfs were freed, they believed they owned the land, that it belonged to them as they belonged to it. There would be no welfare in Russia, he said, till the land belonged again to the people of Russia. And they had been accustomed for generations in their *Mirs*, or village committees, to have the land apportioned by the elders, and this apportioning had been done, as a rule, fairly and wisely. And the *artels* of the workmen showed the same desire of equality.

I had, of course, known this, and so I could only applaud him heartily.

"I have always thought France," I said, "the happiest country in Europe, because the land was divided up at the Revolution among the people; not the best solution of the problem, but a great step towards justice, which has had, on the whole, wonderful results.

"I do hope that you will be satisfied with nationalising the land, for the present at any rate."

"The time has come," he said, "to nationalise all the instruments of production as well. The hour of the social revolution has struck."

"You frighten me," I replied. "You will create a host of formidable opponents by taking the land. Why not wait, if you can, before trying further experiments? Let the good results of the first one become apparent before going further."

"Russia is ready for further steps," he declared, "and I certainly shall not hesitate."

"If you take over the instruments of production," I went on, "you will need to pay captains of industry very highly, and that will cause some dissatisfaction in the rank and file of your Communistic supporters."

"You are mistaken," he replied; "the ordinary workman in Russia is fully capable of directing labour; he is educated in social consciousness. We shall be able to produce just as well as heretofore, without paying more than ordinary wages."

I saw it was no use pursuing the theme. The man who could make that statement was certain to find out his mistake.

"The Russian," I warned, "is remarkably intelligent, but he is not likely to work harder than his neighbour unless he gets something more out of it than his neighbour is getting."

"You are mistaken," said Trotzky again. "We shall all work for Russia and the future."

His idealism appealed to me intensely, but did not convince me for a moment. I tried a new path. "Suppose," I said, "that after taking over the land and nationalising it, you also nationalise the railroads and form municipal and communal markets for the sale of food and clothing on a communistic basis, and leave the production of wealth in the hands of the profiteering capitalist for the time being, at any rate."

"Why should we make two bits of the cherry?" he asked.

"Because, to manage railroads," I answered, "or to distribute the products of labour, requires nothing more than honesty; does not demand exceptional ability; co-

operative stores have succeeded in England in competition with capitalist stores, because of their greater honesty, but nowhere has the co-operative production of articles been successful in competition with capitalist production."

"Well," he replied, smiling, "I think we shall surprise you and prove to you that in Russia we can produce wealth on a strictly communistic basis."

"If you do that," I replied, "I shall come to Russia as soon as the war is over, to try to understand the most unselfish people of whom history has any record."

"You don't believe it?" he laughed. I shook my head.

One other point of disagreement between us, I recall now with some amusement.

"What will you do with the banks?" I asked. "Will you nationalise them, or establish a State bank, while leaving the private banks to compete with your State institution?"

"We shall take them all over," Trotzky cried; "we are sure to need capital."

"But you won't get capital in that way," I argued; "if you leave the banks alone, they may help you later to find capital; but if you shut them up or take them over, as you say, you will make all capitalistic Europe your enemy—why not be content for the present with the land and railroads?"

"We want the complete Social Revolution, the antithesis to the capitalist State in every particular."

"But, after all," I broke in, "the capitalist State functions—responds, that is, to the most vital needs of the people; but who shall say that your communist State will ever function: it's in the air!"



"A good many of us will live for it and die for it, if needs be," he cried, with flaming eyes.

"I wish I could convince you," I said, "how impracticable, impossible, even unthinkable, it seems to me. We want two principles in life: order even in the skies depends upon an equilibrium between the centrifugal and centripetal forces. You want us all to rush together to a unity; but the individual is often more important than the State."

The talk wandered about, and we made all sorts of alarums and excursions in our conversation, but this disagreement was the pith of the matter. He believed he could get exceptional ability and induce it to put forth exceptional efforts without paying it more than the wage of ordinary labour. I did not believe it. And the fact that Lenin has had to pay high wages to able men shows, I think, that I was right. Even now the reluctant yielding of Lenin on this point frightens me. I hear, too, that production in Russia is becoming more and more satisfactory since Lenin in 1919 introduced a certain measure of Individualism. The worst of it is, that his Marxian prepossessions have hindered him from even imagining the perfect State. The peasants have become landowners, instead of renters from the State. However, I hope for the best; it would, indeed, be deplorable if the great experiment in Russia failed absolutely.

When after a couple of hours Trotzky rose to go, I asked him how he was going to Russia.

"By way of Halifax," he said.

"Good God!" I cried; "you surely won't trust yourself in an English port?"

"Why not?" he asked. "The English are our allies, you forget." (We were talking early in 1917.)

"If you think," I cried, "that the English Government regards itself as an ally of any revolutionary Socialist and firebrand such as you, you are mistaken. Lansdowne and Curzon and Asquith—and, I am inclined to think, Lloyd George as well—regard you as more dangerous than the Kaiser or Bethmann-Hollweg or Hindenburg."

"Curious," he said, looking at me with his great bright eyes; "this is the first time I have seen anti-British bias in you; why, man, however they dislike me personally, they can do nothing: they are our allies, allies of all Russians."

I laughed. "I assure you that they are accustomed 'to wrest the law to their authority,' as Shakespeare put it; you are safer anywhere than in English hands."

But Trotzky only laughed again at what seemed to him palpably absurd.

A few days afterwards I heard that he had arrived in Halifax. A week or so later still, a mutual friend called on me and asked me whether I had heard anything of Léon Trotzky. I said I had not, and he told me that nothing had been heard of him since he arrived at Halifax.

"Oh my prophetic soul!" I exclaimed. "Write at once to Washington: there you'll hear of him. I only hope he's not in prison."

He wrote, and it transpired that Trotzky had been taken off the ship and imprisoned by order of the British Government, and was only released after emphatic protests had been made by the American Government; then he went forward to Petersburg, with the world-shaking results we all know.

## EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

Now let anyone read "Soviets at Work," by Nikolai Lenin, and he will find the confession there of Lenin that he had to pay captains of industry extravagantly in order to get them to work with him. He, at least, has partly learned the lesson. In this pamphlet he says:

"Higher productivity of labour depends, firstly, on the improvement of the educational and cultural state of the masses of the population . . . secondly, economic improvement depends on higher discipline of the toilers, on higher skill, efficiency, and intensity of labour, and its better organisation" . . . and finally he admits that "the development of a new basis of labour discipline is a very long process."

This book, "Soviets at Work," has been declared to be non-mailable in the U. S.; but, if our capitalists had any sense, they would see that it contains the most valuable criticism of the Bolsheviki in existence; the most valuable criticism of Communism that has ever been written is written here by Nikolai Lenin, for he admits that not even the peasant will produce unless he is assured that the product of his labour shall belong to him.

## XVII

### THE RUSSIAN DELEGATES AT GENOA

THESE articles on the leaders of the Russian Soviets were written in the spring of 1922 at Genoa, where I met most of them, time and again, and often heard their views in the making, so to speak, and thus learned to appreciate their sincerity. These sketches are not worthy to be called portraits: one has to know a man intimately before you can do a soul-likeness of him; these are but thumb-nail sketches: "snapshots," so to say—taken, too, in a peculiar light.

They have, however, a certain superficial value as giving the Russian leaders' view of the revolution and the actual situation in Russia, and this view of theirs is supplemented by the critical appreciation of Emma Goldman, one of the best of contemporary observers. If I publish here Miss Goldman's despairing, root and branch condemnation of Lenin, Trotzky, and their régime, I do so partly because it is supported by the quick wit of Mrs. Philip Snowden and partly by the ominous reticences of Maxim Gorki; mainly in the hope, however, that it may help to discredit the arbitrary murders and imprisonings of the Tcheka, and perhaps persuade Lenin, Trotzky, and Tchitcherin that force is never a remedy, and that the tyrant is even less to be excused when he usurps power than when he inherits it.

These men are all intelligent and of our time; they know that to stifle your adversary is a confession that

you fear him, and no one practises repression who does not distrust his own vision. In their fanatic resolve to establish equality, they seem to have despised individual liberty and used law as a bludgeon. Since the spring of 1919 they have changed their methods somewhat: why will they not remember that capital punishment was never indigenous in Russia, and do away finally with the Tcheka? why not allow those who recognise their high aims to support them whole-heartedly? why insult well-wishers and sicken friends?

Lenin was not afraid to admit he had failed, and to institute a certain measure of liberty: why not now abolish the Tcheka and institute Justice, even if he is not big enough to put faith in forgiveness instead of the rod? Compassion, as even Bacon knew, is the true measure of high-minded rule: I do not wish to believe that Lenin is incapable of it.

#### TCHITCHERIN, THE TRAINED DIPLOMATIST

The Russian delegates to the Genoa Conference were most carefully guarded. Fearing their own Fascisti, the Italians allotted the Imperial Hotel at Santa Margharita to the Russians—twenty odd miles away from the crowded city.

This hotel overlooks the bay, and is comfortable. It was guarded like a prison; before entering the grounds, my credentials were demanded. When I showed a letter from Tchitcherin, I was permitted to proceed.

At the door of the hotel I was met by another functionary, who wanted my name and address, as well as the time appointed to me. When this information was forthcoming, I was again asked to wait, and finally

learned that Mr. Tchitcherin had several delegations to meet, so found it impossible to keep his engagement with me that day unless I could return after *dejeuner*—say about 2 or 3 o'clock.

I said I should prefer to lunch at the Imperial, if that were possible, for I had learned by the "gossip" of the hotel that Tchitcherin was very busy and did not like interviewers or, indeed, journalists. So I thought it better to keep a firm hold on the forelock of opportunity.

When I entered the reception-room at the Imperial Hotel, three hours after luncheon, two men were talking at a table near the door on my right. As Mr. Tchitcherin, a stoutish person of good middle height, came to greet me, one of these men jumped up and hastened towards us; it was Raffalovich, now a Professor of French at Dartmouth College, on his vacation. I had last seen him in New York some three or four years before.

He had been talking with Tchitcherin's secretary, and was kind enough now to recommend me warmly to Tchitcherin, saying that I was a famous writer and a steady friend of the Russian Soviets. Tchitcherin's manner, which was very simple and friendly, became cordial. We sat down and began our talk.

I was struck at once by his nervousness, which seemed out of keeping with his soft plump face. His smile glints and goes; his agate eyes suddenly gleam or pierce, and then once more peer absently or resignedly; perpetual quick changes of expression; a mass of nerves, one would say, in spite of his rather stout figure.

That's perhaps the reason he dislikes publicity, avoids photographers, shrinks from interviews, though he is a great worker and never seems to think of rest or per-



sonal comfort. They say of him, in Moscow, that he works twenty hours out of the twenty-four, and often gives interviews at 3 or 4 A. M. Even here, in Italy, he usually goes to bed at 5, and is on foot again about 8. An indefatigable mind in a restless body. He treats his meals like his bed; he is usually the last to sit down and the first to leave; eats absent-mindedly, now peering through spectacles at papers piled beside his plate, now looking up to smile at the remark of some colleague, or throw in a modification—always alert, his mind ever at work.

"It seems to me," I confessed, "that the case of Russia has been badly presented, at least to the American public: the immense tidal wave in favour of equality came from the Russian people themselves; Miliukoff and Prince Lvov were moderately radical; as soon as their programme was known and their limitations felt, the people rejected them, and Kerensky, the Socialist, came to power. When his timidity in turn became apparent, he was tossed aside and the reins handed to Lenin and Trotzky, who correctly interpreted the will of the mass of people and satisfied their popular desires. They have 'gone too far and too fast,' as Lenin said, and are now modifying their original plan; the direction, too, has changed, nevertheless Lenin again, in putting the brake on, is the true exponent of the soul of the people."

Tchitcherin heard me with quick smiles. "That's the truth," he said, "that's the fact roughly."

"To come to yourself," I went on; "the English and American papers treat you as if you were a sort of outlaw." Tchitcherin smiled lifting his brows: "What do I care?"

"It does your cause harm," I countered warmly. "If the English, for example, had been told that you were bred to diplomacy, like many of your family; that your father was a member of the Paris Embassy, and another Tchitcherin had been Mayor of Moscow, the editors would have treated your statements with more consideration; they are all snobs."

"You might go on to tell them," he replied mischievously, "that my great-grandfather was one of the two murderers of the Emperor Paul in 1801. Prince —— and my ancestor, Tchitcherin, used his scarf to strangle him, under the direction of Count Palish.

"I don't care a jot what they think of me personally," he broke in earnestly, "so long as they help Russia; but they don't seem inclined to do anything worth while," he added, a little bitterly I thought.

His disdain of opinion, of prejudice, of appearance is the keynote of his character. He meets the King of Italy with the same withdrawn expression he shows to a French journalist; he will not talk of the murder of the Romanoffs.

"We in Moscow knew nothing about it, we were 3000 versts away; and to tell the truth, we cared little. Are six individuals important when 60,000 a day are dying of hunger?"

His mind sees things in true proportion and perspective, and Tchitcherin is impatient of all considerations that are not reasonable. He stands for realities.

The delegates of other nations are riding about all day in Conference Cars with a blue star on the wind-screen; Tchitcherin comes in from Santa-Margarita by train, and I've not seen him once in these days in the solitary red car provided for the 50 Russians by the

Italian Communists; he either takes a taxi or walks quickly—absorbed in his own thoughts.

"The bourgeois self-interest is against you," I went on. "If the peasants and workers can form a stable Government and make Communism even a partial success, the privileged position of European rulers will be threatened, or rather doomed."

"We see all that," Tchitcherin broke in abruptly; "but the Soviet Government is there; the question is, will the Powers give us money and help us to health again, and life. They are responsible," he went on quickly, "for more than half the ruin and misery to-day in Russia"—the forefinger thrust the argument home—"we don't want gifts from them, but a loan; will they refuse to do anything to atone for all the wrong they have done us, for the wars they waged against us, their Allies! and the wanton destruction they caused?"

"Look, we are willing to do so much; we are willing to repay the sums lent us, or lent the Tsarist Government by the millions of small French investors; we don't want the poor anywhere to suffer through us, or by our fault; but we will not feed the capitalist sharks; we never will," he broke off gloomily.

"You mean the private owners of factories and concessions in Russia which have been nationalised?" I asked.

"I do; why shouldn't we do what the United States has done and is doing? Did the American Government compensate the slave-owners? Did the same Government the other day compensate the saloonkeepers? And yet they want us to be more scrupulous, though they are rich and we are starving."

Meanwhile I had been studying his face, manner,

voice; all made the same impression of nervous, highly-wrought sincerity; this man never paused for a word, took the first that came; he had nothing to conceal, and was not afraid to say worse of himself than his ill-informed opponents have yet invented.

The illustrated papers have made everyone familiar with his personable figure, the longish oval of his face, the domed forehead, the small pointed yellow-reddish beard and careless drooping rufous moustache; the eyes are of indeterminate colour; they meet you more than fairly, sometimes indeed with a sort of appeal. One notices that he does not smoke; at table he may take a glass of wine, but just as often drinks water. He seems to have no tastes—much less vices—a mind with a passion for thought, pure intellect is Tchitcherin. A man who never forgets his mission; bit by bit his earnestness gains everyone; Lloyd George treats him with special distinction; give him time, and he will achieve something.

Meanwhile, he has not made a single enemy; this is the peculiarity of all these Russians; they are winning friends for themselves on all sides by their passionate sincerity.

I resumed the talk by saying: "The whole question is, can Russia get through without help?"

His brow wrinkled. "We may have to; but the consequences must be appalling; we may have another famine next year; the seed is not sown yet, save in the Ukraine; it is difficult to sow; famine-typhus may become a plague and sweep over all Europe; who can measure the dreadful possibilities?"

"Sometimes I think," Tchitcherin went on, almost as if talking to himself, "I must be a very bad advocate; I have a perfect case, the best a man ever had; millions

of innocent sufferers, thousands of child-lives at stake, judges that seem fair-minded and let me talk as I will, and yet I get nowhere.

"The Tsarist Government could raise a loan of 100,000,000 sterling in an hour; I seem unable to get it in a month. The fault must be in me; but tell me what I have done wrong, where have I failed? What missed?"

"You are up against the self-interest of all successful men everywhere," I said, "and they will not help your subversive doctrines in any way. They broke the French Revolution and brought it to a pitiful collapse; they broke the revolution of 1848, and derided the new Gospel; they will never give in. The question is, can you go on without outside help? if you can, all right; if not, it will be a long, long waiting for you—a long drawn-out martyrdom."

"Have they no humanity?" he cried. "Saving common-sense even would show them that Russia must be helped if Europe is to be saved. Think of it," he went on; "they talk of six Romanoffs, and we shall lose 6,000,000 Russian lives between now and harvest; that's Nansen's reckoning—6,000,000. Our population has shrunk from 180,000,000 to 140,000,000; 4,000,000 perished in the war—twice as many as the French lost! Then the capitalist Governments made war on us, set Poland to tear us here and the Japs there, and Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenitch, Wrangel and the rest, and we lost millions more of young Russian lives!

"When we conquered, we made peace at once on fairest terms, taking nothing, giving all. Then the drought came, and famine; and exhausted, perishing, we ask the nations to atone a little for the wrongs they have done us,



and they hold back and haggle and refuse! It is incredible," and his voice broke.

The reporters have told that when Tchitcherin on that Sunday, a month ago, signed the treaty with Germany his face was working and tears poured down. I can believe it; he has real intelligence, and intelligence cannot understand inhumanity—the great word is always there: "*They know not what they do!*"

I had nothing to say—no word more; he was so right, and Russia's appeal should have found an immediate response—a cordial response; but could hardly have found a better, certainly no sincerer or abler advocate.

And yet I felt certain he would not get the help he needed; the bourgeois Governments, as he called them, all feel sure that, left to themselves, the Soviet Communists must fail and be rejected by the starving people; but I am inclined to agree with Tchitcherin that the inference shows how greatly the intelligence of the Russian people is underrated.

"The people know we're doing our best," he said; "they trust us and will wait. The patience of our Russians is astounding," he added. "Who could fail to do his best for them?"

But the sense of failure was on him, and its depression in his voice; yet who shall say? The end is not yet, and what mortals call failure sometimes is better than triumph!

No wonder these Russian delegates were the only delegates cheered on the streets by the Italian populace. In spite of all the falsehoods spread abroad by the capitalist press of all countries, the Italian people, too, have the conviction that this delegation speaks for them as well as



for the dispossessed of Russia, and so they greet them with warm cheers!

My last talk with Tchitcherin in Genoa convinced me of the man's entire sincerity. I brought him a cutting from a speech just delivered by Winston Churchill in London.

The King of Italy had come to Genoa and entertained the Russians, with all the other delegates, at dinner on his battleship; the Russians appeared in dress-clothes, which excited Winston's anger. "Communists," he sneered, "in Court dress!"

"It's hard to satisfy our Capitalist-Critics," said Tchitcherin, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. "One day they find me clad in pants, patched on the one side with linen and on the other with leather: these patches disagree, and tear apart, and the critics sneer. The next time I go to a dinner in dress-clothes, as they do, and they sneer again.

" 'Why did they put me in prison in Brixton?' you ask: 'simply for holding the opinions for which they now honour and discuss Marx and Engels. If they would only cease jeering and help Russia to her feet, they would win the passionate gratitude of humanity.'"

The more the Russian Revolution is studied, the more honour will be paid to the leaders; they have taken nothing for themselves, which naturally confuses the ordinary Anglo-Saxon politician. But why reckon their self-sacrifice as a vice?

Take these figures alone—and they can be trusted:

The 38,387 schools of 1917 were increased to 52,274 in 1918 and to 62,238 in 1919. The growth in two years of Revolution and famine is more than in the last thirty

years of Tsarism. Take one fact—over six millions of children were fed steadily in the schools last year.

The high schools and Universities, too, have about doubled in number, and those of us who know the Art Gallery of the Hermitage at Petrograd must be pleasantly surprised by the great increase to be seen there in modern masterpieces. One of the finest Watteaus in existence was discovered in a servant's room in the Gatchina Palace. Two new Galleries have been opened in Moscow, thanks to the millionaires Morosov and Shtchukin, and there the modern French School of Painting can be better studied than anywhere, even in Paris. I am giving these facts almost at haphazard from the notes of Lunacharski, the Minister of Education; he adds simply that some five million illiterate adults have been taught to read and write in the last three years by the Bolsheviks.

No such effort has ever been made for the humanisation of man; and remember, please, that Nansen is responsible for the statement that in 1921 only eight millimetres of rain-water fell in six provinces of Russia, against an average of one hundred, and that even in 1891—the year of the last severe famine—thirty-four millimetres fell. Yet the Allied nations, when asked at Genoa to help the famine-stricken, refused point-blank; and while Hoover boasts that we Americans have spent 59 millions of dollars in charity in Eastern Russia, he says nothing about the 189 millions that we gave to Bakmetief without rhyme or reason.

Gradually, but surely, the selfish greed of the Allies is forcing Germany and Russia into ever-closer union, with results soon to become obvious even to the purblind moles we call politicians.

## RAKOWSKY, INTERPRETER OF THE SOVIET SOUL

Rakowsky is the President of the Ukraine, and holds sway at Kharkow over forty odd millions of people, who have a Soviet Government of their own, in perfect sympathy with the Soviets of Moscow.

Rakowsky looks like an American: he is above middle height, lean, dark, hatchet-faced, well-featured and clean-shaven. Smiles don't visit his face and then vanish, as is the case with Tchitcherin; but his face, saturnine in repose, is often sunny for minutes at a time. He was a Communist before even Lenin, and an economist of the first rank; something more than a disciple of Marx. From the moment he reached Genoa he made himself the interpreter of the Soviet soul.

The heads of the University here placed the large lecture-hall of the University at his disposal, and there, with a blackboard at hand, Rakowsky took his stand and in racy, idiomatic French taught some hundreds of the ablest journalists in the world the meaning and purpose of the Russian Revolution and its place in the historic evolution of mankind.

He welcomes questions, and they are shot at him from all sides and in half a dozen different tongues. He answers all of them from a surprising fund of thought and a really wide reading. To the amazement of thinking Frenchmen, he links up the Russian Revolution with the French Revolution of 150 years ago, and shows that its worst mistakes are merely copied from French example, while its virtues are its own. The Russians have freed themselves of all privileged classes, while the French were content to get rid of the hereditary ruler and his nobles; and where the French Revolution made war and

annexed territory, the Soviets have only defended themselves against attack and have made peace always at the first opportunity, proving themselves eager to give rather than take.

And this was only the A. B. C., so to speak, of a statement that grew in interest as he went on.

#### HOW RUSSIA WAS RUINED

He tells you what the war did for Russia; how it exhausted her resources and diminished not only her territory and the number of her inhabitants, but also her productive capacity.

Taking agriculture as Russia's chief industry, Rakowsky shows that arable land outside the Ukraine has shrunk from 160,000,000 acres to less than 100,000,000, and the producing power of the acre has also fallen more than 25 per cent!

Before the war, the harvest was always injured by a host of insect-plagues; since the war, this damage has grown to extraordinary proportions, because it has been impossible to import disinfectants. Before the war, Russia used to export annually some 70,000,000 tons of grain; to-day she does not produce enough for her own needs: cattle and horses have decreased nearly 20 per cent., while the smaller animals, such as sheep and pigs, have dropped to one-half.

The effect of the war on industry has been far more fatal. In 1920, only one-quarter as much coal was produced as in 1913; but, thanks to the Soviets, this product has been doubled in 1921. In 1920, the production of petroleum was only 40 per cent. of what it was in 1913; again in 1921 there was a certain, though small, improve-

ment. The production of woollen goods, leather, and paper all fell to one-quarter, but in this last year all show a considerable development. Had it not been for the famine in the Volga region—a famine caused by long-continued drought—Russia would have been able by herself to crawl painfully out of the pit.

The worst of it is that all the means of transport have shrunk in the most extraordinary way: railway rolling-stock has gone from bad to worse, like ordinary waggons and agricultural machines. Russia must expend 25,000,000 pounds sterling on agricultural implements in order to reach her pre-war condition.

#### WHAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DONE

Rakowsky gives figures proving that the wars waged by the Allies on Russia and the infamous blockade are responsible for more destruction and loss than the three previous war years.

"Take one item," he says. "In 1918 our bridges and roads were fairly all right; since then the Allies and their emissaries have destroyed 4000 bridges; the Soviets have managed in the last year and a half to reconstruct some 2000 bridges, but we need iron girders and credit to get our roads again into proper order."

The Soviets were forced by constant unprovoked attacks to rebuild the war machine at all cost. Rakowsky declares that it is now more powerful than ever before—a fact which France would do well to bear in mind before attempting to move troops into the Ruhr or to encourage Polish Imperialism. "Were it not for the Soviets," says Rakowsky, "Russia would be a desert; one little fact will teach more than a long dissertation; in 1913 there

were 5000 steamers in constant daily use on our Russian rivers; in 1920 we had only 3000, and many of them were shockingly out of repair, or lacking in necessary parts.

"We are only able to live in Russia by heavy import duties, duties even on sugar and tobacco. Our finances have all gone to pieces: 1,000,000 rubles is now called a 'lemon' derisively on the streets in Moscow and Petrograd and Odessa. A labouring man needs half a 'lemon' a day in order to live.

"Our budget of expenses tells its own tale," Rakowsky went on; "25 per cent. goes to the upkeep of the Red Army, 15 per cent. for the means of transport—roads, railways, and inland navigation; 10 per cent. for public instruction, 5 per cent. more for building schools, 10 per cent. for the public health, and practically all the rest in a special budget for the starving.

"One last word. Before the Soviets came, there were only four in every 100 of our soldiers able to read and write; to-day the proportion is 85 per cent. No one will deny that we have done, and are doing, more to educate our people than any other Government."

"All this while," I broke in, "you have said nothing about the Ukraine."

"True, true," he cried, the great smile illumining his whole face, "but don't imagine you've escaped. This year's seed has been sown already in Ukraine; with ordinary conditions we should have an average crop—think of it—grain to export, perhaps. Besides, I've got our people to sow maize and make it the chief cereal, as it is with you in the States, and I expect wonderful results. Oh," he broke off, "we must have another long talk all about the Ukraine, the heart of Russia; but here is my wife,



ask her about it; here is the situation in a word:

"Russia gave 4,000,000 soldier lives to the Allied cause, and 10,000,000 of women and children's lives; for thanks, they made war on us and blockaded us; we ask them now not to atone, but to lend a helping hand, for they it was who thrust Russia into the pit. Never forget that, please!"

#### A WORD WITH MME. RAKOWSKY

Rakowsky seemed eager and proud to present me to his wife, and no wonder. Madame Rakowsky is above middle height, very good to look at, with splendid eyes and rounded oval face, and even better to talk with; for her sympathy with the Soviet cause and her love of the Russian people warm all her utterances. She is indeed an apostle of the gospel of labour, and Carlyle would have made a deathless portrait of her. I can still see her standing firmly erect while she confessed to me her impatience with the wordy wars of the Conference, the interminable haggling.

"These delegates," she said, "all talk of their country's interest; it is egoism on every hand; but there is in reality only one interest, and that is humanity. Every day I tell my husband that I want to get back to the Ukraine and join the other Russian women at work. I'm almost ashamed to eat here in the sun while there so many are starving in gloom.

"Mr. Rakowsky told you that he hopes the maize crop that he has induced our people to sow this spring will have great results; I hope so too; but I have even more faith in the work and loving hearts of our Russian women."

"Has the Soviet Government brought about a great change in this respect?" I asked.

"Surely, surely," Mme. Rakowsky replied; "but you are coming to Russia, are you not? So you will see for yourself. Two things the Soviets have achieved that even their bitterest enemy must admit and praise. They have done more to educate the Russian children than was ever done before—ten times as much, twenty times as much; and you can't imagine how eagerly the Slav soul longs for knowledge and responds to it. It is possessed with that imaginative sympathy that leads straight to wisdom."

"You are indeed a persuasive advocate," I cried.

"I am a convinced advocate," Mme. Rakowsky went on, smiling, "and so would you be if you had lived through these last tragic years in Russia. The Soviets, both in Kharkoff and Moscow, are doing all that men can for the groaning millions under their charge, and especially for the children.

#### WORK FOR CHILDREN

"And this work for the children has called out the women's assistance, and of the middle classes there are three women at work to-day for one that worked before the revolution.

"We women will save Russia yet; the worst is over, I firmly believe. In the Ukraine, at least, the harvest will be fair, a good average. Of course in the East and South, on the Volga, there is appalling destitution—why does not America help? Hoover, we hear, is throwing off the burden of the work. I can't believe it: he knows our dreadful plight. Do you know him?"

I shook my head.

"Well," Mme. Rakowsky went on, "do your best for Russia, and when you come there you will see that I have not exaggerated. A Government is only good in so far as it works for the future; no Government could have done more for the children than the Soviets have done everywhere in Russia.

"You have no idea," she added, smiling, as her husband came up to us, "how eager I am to get back to work. Am I not?" she asked, and Rakowsky lifted hands and eyes in recognition: "Italy cannot seduce her from her love of Russia!" he smiled.

#### KRASSIN: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN WEST AND EAST

Of all the Soviet leaders, Krassin and Rakowsky are to me personally the most sympathetic. The note of Krassin, the characteristic, is virile energy. One can easily understand, merely from seeing him, that he was a success in business before the revolution; a man above middle height, of strong erect figure and handsome leonine face; the features are regular, the nose straight, the forehead broad, the chin pointed; the blue eyes meet yours boldly, the dark hair is powdered with silver, as is the small moustache and short pointed beard.

Krassin understands our Western Europe, and especially the British mind, better than any of his Russian colleagues; he is, besides, a master-diplomatist, with both persuasive and driving power. It interests the English to find that this man talks security and cash, cash and security, as ably as their ablest, while never forgetting that he pleads a question of life and death for millions of innocent beings.

Krassin was not a Communist before the war, as

Tchitcherin was, or Rakowsky. He watched the revolution sympathetically, and finally accepted the Soviet Government of Lenin and Trotzky because he saw it was desired by the Russian people, was in the truest sense a great popular movement; consequently his view of the Bolshevik régime may be taken as fairly correct. He says now that the Soviet Government is firmly established: "It will last our time, at least, and really Lenin and Trotzky and Tchitcherin have shown great qualities, and time and again extraordinary practical wisdom. Their difficulties have been almost insuperable, and the Allies are to blame for the worst of them; I don't attribute the drought and famine to the Allies," he added, with grim humour, "though Lord Northcliffe declared that they were due to the Bolsheviks; but, if a fair balance could be struck, I am sure the Allies would be found to be deeply in debt to Russia."

"You speak as if you feared the outcome?" I questioned.

"I do," he replied, and an expression of pain swept across his face. I then noticed for the first time that, under the courageous self-confidence of his manner, there was a deep melancholy in his fine face, as of one who had long ago realised:

*"The weary weight of this unintelligible world."*

"What is your greatest difficulty?" I asked.

"The sheer ignorance of the Allies," he replied, "and their lack of imaginative insight. We may yet get something from Britain; but France and Belgium wish to force us to give back to their former owners, and particularly to their compatriots, all the private property nationalised by the Soviets. That's asking too much," he went on, "and they won't get it; but they might get a

fair amount of compensation if they were a little more conciliatory. I still have hopes," he added, "for the best heads in England are extraordinarily sympathetic and intelligent."

Krassin is the bridge, so to speak, between the Equality-urge of Soviet Russia and the capitalistic individualism of the Allied Governments. He is respected and liked in both camps; yet he is heart and mind now with the Soviets. Moreover, his influence on Lenin, as an old school-fellow, is said to be stronger than that of anyone else.

I have tried in these articles to give my readers the impression that meeting and talking with the Russian delegates to Genoa made upon me. If I could convey to them a part even of the enthusiasm and passionate devotion that flashed upon me from Mme. Rakowsky, I should be doing better than my best.

But here is the bare truth: Of the five delegates, three seemed to me extraordinary men, men who would be marked and distinguished in any company on earth; Tchitcherin, a pure intelligence studying the affairs of the time as a moment in the evolution of mankind, recognising that the urge to equality is the note of to-day and to-morrow, just as liberty was the battle-cry of the two or three preceding centuries.

Krassin, a man of the world, understanding all the egoisms, seeking to modify opposition by every sort of argument, convinced himself, as Tchitcherin too is convinced, that anything done to lift Russia out of the mud is work of the highest value to humanity.

Rakowsky, a born ruler and administrator—a Communist from his youth up in 1889—a thinker who believes that the collective effort, if wisely directed, will

produce even greater material benefits than self-thwarting individualism, a sort of Henry Ford sublimated above self, who rejoices in the opportunity his great position gives him, and is resolved by study and reflection to do all he can for others and so realise, as Schiller said finely, all the dreams of his youth.

And last of all, but not least, Mme. Rakowsky, who interpreted for me the self-sacrificing devotion which is, so to speak, the perfume of the Slav soul.

I have said nothing of Litvinoff and Joffe. I saw too little of them to get intimate, deep impressions:

Litvinoff seems a cheerful Marxian, who delights in outwitting the French delegates on the Sub-Commission; as they grow voluble and insistent, he smiles and, unperturbed, becomes positively bland as they boil over.

Joffe I could picture, but he is best seen in Jo. Davidson's excellent bust; for by nature he is silent and seems happy; broad he is, and strong too, with excellent features and full black beard mottled picturesquely with grey and silver—an Elizabethan face, with confident, kind eyes that seem lifted above all contention or suffering in immemorial placidity. He delights in praising Siberia—climate, inhabitants, opportunities—he was for some years in prison there, it appears, as was Trotzky; but prison, even in Siberia, left no scars or sores on Joffe: he is by nature a happy philosopher.

Krassin has invited me to go to Moscow with him; I shall go with a heart and a half, and hope, too, to fulfil Mme. Rakowsky's wish that I might study the Russian situation from Kharkoff as well as Moscow, for it is South Russia, she reminds me, that was first called "Holy Russia."



## XVIII

### EMMA GOLDMAN, THE FAMOUS ANARCHIST

**M**EN stone the prophets still, and persecute those sent to them to point the upward way! In prison oft, this female St. Paul, an exile now and outcast from her own, living in Berlin even on sufferance from six months' permission to six months, and no asylum, no place of rest in the wide world, if this be denied her; yet courageous still, and uncomplaining, full, indeed, of joyous energy and pregnant with plans of work.

Think of it. She might be rotten to the teeth with self-indulgence, one foul infectious sore, leprous or syphilitic, and men would take her to their pity, nurses would wait on her by night and day, doctors would minister to her with all their skill; but try to teach and guide mankind, be brave and true, hearken only to the God-given inspiration of your soul, live resolutely to the highest in you, and men will treat you as they treat a mad dog and, in their fear and hate, drive you from pillar to post, hound you through the world, to punish and torture and kill.

"What harm have I done?" cries the victim.

"None; you have tried to do us good—to Calvary with you."

As she comes towards me in the hall of the hotel, I scan her with curious sympathy, reverence even. Clearly not for ornament, this unpretentious, quick-moving little person; her hat "looks as if it had been stuffed in her

pocket," I tell her, laughing; "my head," she counters, smiling, "is made for a rope, not for a hat." Very short, some inches less than five feet high; but strongly built, and carrying herself sturdily. No one would take her for a Jewess, this Gretchen, with her grey-blue eyes, brown hair, and undetermined features. She is very short-sighted, too, and has to wear glasses at all times. Her unprepossessing appearance, I imagine, must have had its influence in strengthening her character. But she would not have it. "In youth," she said, "my fair skin and eyes brought me more suitors than I knew what to do with, and even now," she added, "I manage to get all the love I want."

One notices at once that she has a pleasant voice of good range, and is wholly free of any affectation or mannerism. She is herself alone, as greatness can afford to be. In a little while you remark that her eyes always meet yours openly, and if you get her to talk of her experiences in Soviet Russia, or in American prisons, she will astonish you with the width and depth of her knowledge and the uncanny impartiality that shines through all she says. Verily those who live with truth have their reward: their words carry conviction.

"A most remarkable woman," you catch yourself saying at the end of an hour; and when you have known her for fifteen years, as I have, you will understand why I write of George Eliot, Emma Goldman, and Olive Schreiner as the three greatest women I have ever met. Two out of the three are Jewesses; and, if I added three more heroines to my list, the proportion would not be altered, for I would name Sarah Bernhardt, Miss Schuster, and Christine Rossetti. And why should I hesitate

to confess it: the greatest of them all, in my opinion, is Emma Goldman.

I know many well-meaning people will hold up their hands at this, and pedantic critics will wonder whether I have the right to compare a mere agitator and journalist with an artist like George Eliot. "What has Miss Goldman done," they will ask, "that can be compared with 'Silas Marner' or 'The Mill on the Floss'?"

Well, I have the advantage of having known and admired George Eliot; yet I am sure that she who always called herself Mrs. Lewis was far inferior to Emma Goldman in courage, and there is no page in George Eliot that for sublimity can compare with Emma Goldman's confession of how she lost her sympathy with Bolshevism and the Russian revolutionaries. In due course I will put it before my readers, and they shall judge. Here I can only say that the love of truth and high loyalty to the ideal revealed in this change of attitude puts Emma Goldman among the heroic leaders and guides of humanity for ever.

She is now fifty-three years of age, having been born in 1869 in Kovno, on the German-Russian border—a product of the best in Germany, Russia, and Jewry. I have been deeply interested in her ever since we first met in New York—in 1909, I think; my book, "The Bomb," having given her the wish to know me. "The trial of the Chicago Anarchists," she confessed, "was the decisive influence in my life: that made me an Anarchist, a revolutionist; and your book is the Bible of that movement."

I asked her what were the earlier formative influences of her life, and she was good enough to write them

down for me herself; so I have nothing to do but transcribe her notes, for it will be well for all of us to follow the growth of a great character, and study its development.

"At the age of six my father carried me, comfortably seated astride his shoulders, to an election meeting. It was in the Baltic village of —, where we lived. For years my father had been in charge of the Government stage, there being no railroad in our part of the country at that time. The position was decided by election. Father had always been victorious in the electoral contests.

"The town hall was thick and ill-smelling with smoke from bad tobacco. The peasants were drunk. Barrels of vodka supplied an endless stream. It was a vile, brutal scene, the peasants gesticulating, screaming, and swearing as only Russian peasants can. Presently the results of the votes were announced. My father was defeated. Hooting, yelling, and jeering followed him out of the hall. On the way out, I asked him why the other man had been chosen. 'Because we are Jews, dear child, and the other man gave more vodka.' I was puzzled: 'Jews'? and 'more vodka'?

"Years later, when I attended the first election meeting in America, this scene in the Baltic village came back in a flash. Again I saw that drink or bribery decided the issue. The mass of men, debased and brutalised, had no conception of faithful service and unselfish work. I think it was this election experience which saved me from putting any trust in politics—social democratic politics included. I had looked behind the scenes, so could never be deceived by the Punch and Judy show which beguiles and misleads the stupid public.

“Another episode of a graver character made me see militarism in all its naked savagery. My father kept an inn, where the military officials and doctors would gather annually to draft the young peasants of our neighbourhood. Strapping boys, often the mainstay of the whole family and needed on the land, came as sheep to the slaughter and were put in the military yoke and sent out, sometimes never to return. Their unfortunate mothers would go down into the very dust to lick the boots of the drafting commissioners, begging them to release their sons. When that failed, the peasant women would turn to my mother for help. She must see the *Barina* (masters), give them honey, butter, money—in fact, anything—only to leave their sons on the land. Often my mother would succeed. She was a very beautiful woman, vivacious, and a born diplomat. Then the peasant women would fairly prostrate themselves before her. But more often mother would fail. Then the heart-broken mothers would tear their hair, beat their breasts, and fill the air with their complaints and lamentations. Frantically they would hold on to their boys, covering their faces with wild, passionate kisses, while the officers would order the soldiers to use the knout in order to separate mother and child.

“Then there was the brutality of the officers to the soldiers. I remember especially a frail orderly who was polishing the boots of his superior. For some reason he incurred the displeasure of the officer, who, without a word, rushed at the boy and whipped him across the face, bringing forth a stream of blood. My sister Helena, eight years older than I, and usually a very timid girl, threw herself on the officer and pounded his chest with her small fists. The affair came near land-

ing our whole family in prison, and possibly causing a pogrom against the Jews. Fortunately, the Colonel had known my father for some time, and smoothed matters over. But the heart-breaking scenes of drafting and the brutality of the officers had a decisive effect upon my sympathies; they marked the beginning of my hatred of militarism and my struggle against it as an inhuman institution.

"Another deep impression of my childhood was in a different field. My mother, very German, had a perfect obsession for German nurse-girls for our 'culture.' These girls were never permitted to remain with us for very long. The Baltic nobility, depleted in station but not in sensuality, were hot after our nurse-girls, and soon the human—all too human—result would take place. Then, in moral indignation, mother would send the girl away, and rush off to Königsberg for another importation. One girl had wound herself around my heart. Amalia was her name. She was a lovely creature, and could tell the most marvellous Maerchen. One evening I saw my adored Amalia in tears. What had happened? 'Ach, Ich muss fort.' I flew to mother. 'Mutter, liebe Mutter, why must Amalia go away?' Mother was scandalised. 'Amalia ist ein schlechtes Madchen, und muss weg, sonst wirst du auch schlecht.' (Amalia is a bad girl, and must go, otherwise she'll make you bad too.) I begged and pleaded with mother, but she was obdurate. That night I slept with my arms around Amalia's neck. The next morning I stole into mother's room while she was at breakfast, emptied her purse of part of its contents, and dashed off with it to Amalia.

"The injustice and harshness shown Amalia cured me, as soon as I could understand what had happened, of the



stupid morality which confines motherhood in the straight-jacket of legitimacy. A friend of mine used to say, 'There is no morality in the belly.' I believe he was right. I cannot remember ever having had a moral attitude towards life and love. I remember an episode when I was eight years of age. My sister was sixteen and desperately in love with a Gentile. She almost died of longing for the man, but she would not even see him. As a Jewess, she could not marry him, and the idea of love justifying itself never entered her head. Her arguments against her love were Greek to my child's fancy. In my romantic vision, love stood out clear and radiant: religion, marriage, parents—what could they have to do with love? I could not understand it then, and I have never understood it since. Evidently I was born deficient in what the Puritans call the moral sense. I have no morality in my belly.

"That is the more remarkable because my childhood and adolescence were completely obsessed by so-called German morality: the Marlit, Lindau, Gartenlaube morality. Indeed, I was so very German that I wept bitter tears when my people decided to remove to St. Petersburg. We were living in Königsberg at that time, where I had attended school for six years, and where I had been spoon-fed on German sentimental and patriotic literature, not to speak of the hatred inculcated against Russia—the country of those terrible 'barbarians' and dreadful Nihilists! No, I wanted to remain in Germany, continue my studies; medicine was then my dream. One year in Russia changed my very being and the whole course of my life.

"We arrived in the winter of 1881, the historic year in the Russian revolutionary life. Tsar Alexander had

just fallen, and the blackest reaction followed. Every breath of life was suppressed, yet the passionate youthful desire for ideals could not be stifled. The air was hot with it; secret reading circles and discussion clubs were everywhere. My spirit caught the white flame of Russian idealism; Marlit and the Gartenlaube were abandoned for Tchernyshevsky, Turgeniev, and Gontcharoff. The good German Queen Louisa, once my ideal, was given up in favour of Sophia Perovskaya and Jessie Helfman. I was too young to understand and grasp the theories that carried Russia's youth onward. But my soul became imbued with the humanitarian ideas everywhere in the air. Added to this was the hatred and the persecution of the Jews, which I could not help but see, and which stirred me profoundly. Judith became my ideal, instead of the Gretchen or Louise. I too, would become a Judith, and avenge the cruel wrongs of my race.

"All these vague dreams and ideals were soon to be crystallised into one overpowering purpose. In 1886, with my sister Helena, I went to America—free, glorious America, as I solemnly believed it to be. I still remember the ecstasy that took possession of me as we passed the Statue of Liberty. So must my forebears have felt when they were permitted to enter the Holy of Holies. Soon, however, there was a rude awakening. The sordid grind, the drabness of factory life in Rochester, and then the trial of the Chicago Anarchists—which I followed with bated breath—made me see America in a new and blinding light. Night after night, at the end of ten hours of exhausting work in a clothing shop, for \$2.50 per week, I would bury myself in the

papers and spell out, word for word, the story of the Haymarket trial.

"Then I learned of the existence of a Socialist Club in Rochester. I went there to have the dreadful story explained to me. I found quite another version of the facts than that told in the daily American press. I was given German Socialist and Anarchist papers which related the whole ghastly conspiracy against labour and against the Chicago Anarchists. Lingg, Parsons, Spies, and the others became my heroes, and when the fatal day arrived—that Black Friday, November 11, 1887—I promised myself to take up the ideas of the men done to death there and carry them to the four corners of the earth until the end of my life.

"That very day an event happened which strengthened me in my determination. A relative came to visit my mother. I was too numb with the terrible strain of the weeks before the execution and the horror of that morning. I paid no attention at first to the conversation of my elders. Suddenly I heard the relative say: "Them Anarchist criminals were hanged at last!" I was stabbed to the quick: blind with fury, I snatched up a glass filled with water and dashed it in the woman's face. The glass fell to the ground, and my agony found relief in hysterical weeping. That was my baptism in the Anarchist creed.

"Two years later, in 1889, when I was just twenty, I entered the Anarchist movement; took the thorny road that leads up the long hill to Calvary."

The girl-child, it appears from these outpourings, is the mother of the mature woman. In her hatred of coercion and force, her sympathy with all forms of suffer-

ing, her understanding of poverty and its soul-searing humiliations, her intense enthusiasm for ideals, and above all, her heroic personal courage, that child is essentially Emma Goldman, the Anarchist of to-day. I shall now give some of her later experiences in the United States, just to show how this woman's soul was steeled time and again by injustice and by punishment, till it reached the heroic temper.

Soon after she took the decisive step and became an Anarchist, inspiring influences crowded Emma Goldman's life. First of all, she became the friend of John Most, the notorious Communist lecturer. His impassioned eloquence and tireless energy, together with the persecution he had endured for the cause, combined to excite her enthusiasm. At this time in New York, too, she met Alexander Berkman, the Anarchist, whose friendship has played an important part in her mature life.

The murder of the innocent Chicago Anarchists failed to satisfy the growing power of the greedy capitalists of Wall Street. In 1892 came the great strike of the steel-workers in Pittsburg. Everyone in America has read of the Homestead struggle; the defeat of the Pinkertons and their detective forces; the calling out of the Militia; and the final suppression of the strikers. Stirred to the soul by the pitiless vengeance exercised even on the families of the workmen, Alexander Berkman resolved to sacrifice himself to the cause. He went to Pittsburg and shot Frick, the Gessler of the struggle, in his own office. Fortunately for him, none of his three shots proved fatal, yet the youth of twenty-two was sentenced to twenty-two years in prison. Seven years was the utmost penalty for such a crime as Berkman's, but capitalism was mad with fear, and the judge

was not ashamed to discover and punish five offences in this one crime, and the "kept" press of America was even more incensed than its pay-masters, and wrote of Anarchists as devils and idiots combined. Berkman's act was condemned even by Most and his followers among the German and Jewish Anarchists.

The police used every effort to implicate Emma Goldman in Berkman's act; it was only the fact that she was hundreds of miles away, in New York, that saved her from arrest and the outrageous torture of the "third degree." But for months Emma Goldman, because she had been Berkman's friend, could find no decent lodging in New York City; for some time she had to sleep in the parks in the open, and at length she was glad to get a room on Third Street, in a house occupied exclusively by prostitutes. No wonder her health broke under the strain, and for some time she had to give up her work as a lecturer and take refuge with her beloved sister Helena in the family home at Rochester.

But soon she was again called to the front. There was a great strike of cloakmakers in New York, and a monster demonstration of the unemployed took place in Union Square. Emma Goldman was one of the invited speakers. She delivered an impassioned speech, pictured the sordid misery of the wage-slave's life, and roused the wild applause of the crowd by quoting the famous words used a little while before in London by Cardinal Manning: "Necessity knows no law, and the starving man has a natural right to a share of his neighbours' bread."

The capitalist press began to scream its protest. If these Socialists and Anarchists were allowed to preach robbery, the wage-slave might awaken to the misery of his servitude. The Chief of Police of New York, one



Byrnes, procured a court order for the arrest of Emma Goldman. In October, 1893, she was tried in New York on the charge of inciting to riot. The "intelligent" jury would not accept the testimony of the twelve witnesses for the defence, preferring the evidence of the single detective, Jacobs. Emma Goldman was convicted and sentenced to one year in the Penitentiary.

Since the foundation of the Republic, she was the first woman—Mrs. Surratt excepted—to be imprisoned for a purely political offence.

Her whole year in prison was spent in studying English and in reading Whitman, Thoreau, and Emerson; it is characteristic of her that she still prefers Thoreau.

In August, 1894, she left Blackwell's Island and returned to New York, a woman of twenty-five now, intellectually mature, passionately determined to devote all her energies and give her life, if need be, to the uplifting of the poor and the emancipation of the ignorant. She found herself welcomed at once and acclaimed by the best heads as a leader in the Liberation War of Humanity.

In 1895 she went for a lecture tour in England and Scotland and afterwards to Vienna, where she entered the Allgemein Krankenhaus, to prepare herself as midwife and nurse and study social conditions. In this year she mastered modern literature, and learned to know Hauptmann and Ibsen, Nietzsche and Shaw, as few know them.

In 1897 she undertook her first great lecture tour in America, crossing the continent. Again in 1899 another great tour, and at the close of the year she visited the International Anarchist Conference in Paris.



When the Boer War broke out, she was drawn to England to protest, and several of her meetings were broken up by patriotic mobs. But the visit was made ever memorable to her because she met in London Tom Mann and the sisters Rossetti, the daughters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, then publishers of the Anarchist review, *The Torch*. She also became a friend of Prince Kropotkin and Louise Michel.

But such periods of peaceful development in Emma Goldman's life were dovetailed in, so to speak, as breathing spaces in the long conflict. In September, 1900, President McKinley was shot by Leon Czolgosz at Buffalo. At once a campaign of slander and persecution was begun against Emma Goldman as the foremost Anarchist in the country. She was arrested in Chicago, kept in close confinement for several weeks, and subjected to the fiercest kind of cross-examination and even personal injury. A policeman threw two young men, who had been badly clubbed by his fellows, into the Black Maria, and when Emma told him he had no right to use violence to handcuffed prisoners, he struck her in the mouth and knocked out one of her front teeth!

All the efforts of the police failed; she had no sort of connection with Czolgosz; but the brutal violence of the police and the insults and libels of the "kept" press had left her bruised and sick at heart. For the first time, she says, she realised the bestial stupidity and ignorant prejudice of the average American, and for the first time she saw that enlightenment would not come in her lifetime, if ever; and for months the sad understanding of human savagery depressed her almost to despair. But the courage in her was like that of Milton:

"Never to submit nor yield,  
And what is else not to be overcome!"

She published an article on Czolgosz, in which she tried to explain his deed: *tout comprendre est tout pardonner*, she pleaded; but, though the ordinary Frenchman knows that perfect understanding involves forgiveness, governing America has not yet reached that height.

The rage of persecution broke out afresh. Once more Emma Goldman was unable to find lodgings, and was hounded like a wild beast. She had to take the name of "Miss Smith," and earn her living by practising her profession of nurse on the quiet.

Fortunately, about this time Paul Orlenoff and Madame Nazimova came to New York to acquaint the American public with Russian dramatic art, and "Miss Smith" was selected as manager of the enterprise. She succeeded in raising funds and in introducing the Russian artists to the theatre-goers of New York and Chicago.

The weekly Anarchist publication, *Free Society*, had had to suspend publication because of the nation-wide fury that swept America after the death of McKinley. But Orlenoff and Nazimova gave a benefit performance, and handed the proceeds to Emma Goldman, who therewith, in March 1906, brought out the first number of *Mother Earth*, which she has continued uninterruptedly up to her imprisonment in 1917.

In May of this same year Alexander Berkman was released after fourteen years in his prison-hell. No one can say what the renewal of friendship meant to both; henceforth they were practically inseparable. Of course, the breakdown of the Russian Revolution in 1905 had

driven many of the Russian Anarchists to America, notably Tchaikovsky and Madame Breshkovskaya: they were welcomed and helped by Miss Goldman.

In 1907 she took part in the second Anarchist Conference in Amsterdam, and, with Max Bajinski, published a sort of defence of Anarchist ideas, which I shall give later.

But now Miss Goldman, when nearing forty, was destined to meet the man who could be lieutenant and press-agent and business representative all in one, and so helped her to achieve nation-wide notoriety, if not fame. Again I let her tell her own story.

"In March, 1908, I was booked to deliver fourteen lectures in Chicago. Two days before my arrival, a young Russian boy, who had been brutally clubbed by the police during the unemployed demonstrations of that year, went to the house of the Chief of Police, evidently with the intention of taking his life. The son of the Chief riddled the boy with fourteen bullets the moment he opened the door.

"I had never in my life seen the boy. I certainly knew nothing of his plans. Yet my meetings were immediately suppressed and my name was, as usual, connected with the attempt upon the life of the Chief. Not only that, but when I arrived in Chicago I found the station full of detectives, who from that moment, and for weeks after, never let me out of their sight.

"The whole city was, as usually, terrorised, and no hall-keeper could be induced to rent his place for my lectures; not even the Socialists, who, as a matter of fact, were more violent in their attacks upon the Anarchists than the 'kept' press. At the last moment a man came to the fore, offering a store which he was using for

the Hobo Welfare Association. I could speak there, he said. That man was Dr. Ben Reitman, who had played an important part in the unemployed activities in Chicago, and who had himself been clubbed by the police. But the Chicago authorities were determined that I should not speak in Chicago. They sent men from the Building and Fire Department to Dr. Reitman's hall, to declare it unsafe.

"We decided upon another method to test the right of free speech. A radical organisation arranged a social meeting. My name was nowhere mentioned as speaker. On the evening of the affair, I managed to slip out of the back entrance of the house where I lived, which was carefully watched by detectives; I got safely to the hall and to the front of the platform. After someone played a violin solo, I got on the platform and began to speak. Immediately the police, who lined the hall, rushed to the platform, dragged me off by force, almost tearing my clothes off my back, and threw me out into the street. That ended the attempt at free speech on my visit in 1908.

"The violence of the police, however, had some good results. It aroused tremendous interest in Anarchist ideas and in my work. It brought the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* to the front. I was offered the columns of that paper for a series of articles, which I promptly accepted, thereby reaching vast numbers of people I could not possibly have reached by my lectures.

"Up to that time, my work had to be carried on along limited lines, mostly through the assistance of small Anarchist groups, who had no possibilities and perhaps were not efficient enough to make my lectures widely known in the different communities. But after my ex-

perience in Chicago, Ben Reitman became my manager, and from that time dates the tremendous success of the work we did all over the country until I was deported from America.

"After the Chicago experience, I went to Winnipeg, Canada. On the way back to America I was held up at the border, taken off the train, and questioned about my citizenship. I gave the necessary information, and was permitted to go on. But this experience had some serious and wholly unexpected results which I may relate here.

"In 1909 the Federal authorities sent two detectives to Rochester, New York (my home town); these men worked for months, succeeded in bribing the parents of the man to whom I had been married, perhaps also terrorised them; but, in any event, the old people went on the witness stand and testified that their son, on taking out his citizen's papers, had not been five years in the country, and was not 21 years of age himself. Goldman, my husband, was absent, no one knew where, yet he was thus disfranchised; needless to say, that was done, not to strike him, but in due time to get rid of me.

"In 1909, after the murder of Francesco Ferrer, I went to Philadelphia to speak. I found the hall surrounded by police on horseback and foot, and the entrance barred to me, although the audience was permitted to attend. The next day, at the suggestion of some Single Tax friends of mine, we carried the action of the police into court.

"Of course, the court decided against me, and, for a long time after that, free speech was abolished in Philadelphia.

"The same year I came to San Francisco, California,



for a series of eight lectures. All went well the first evening. On my arrival at the hall the next evening, I found it surrounded by police. Two detectives presented me with a warrant, ordering my arrest. In the patrol waggon I found my manager and William Buwaldo, the soldier who had received five years' military prison for shaking hands with me the year before. His sentence had been commuted by Roosevelt. He had just come out of prison, and we had dinner together before going to the hall. Eight charges of conspiracy were preferred against Reitman and myself, and we were held under \$16,000 bail, which friends promptly furnished. It took six weeks before we could get to trial. The trial was, of course, a farce, and we were acquitted. But I lost valuable time and considerable money, without getting the least redress from the authorities.

"However, the advertisement which our arrest gave us helped tremendously with my meetings in Portland and Seattle. I never had had such large audiences before. At the last moment, I was arrested in Seattle, held overnight without excuse, and then set free. We then went to Everett, Washington.

"In the next eight or ten years, as my popularity grew, the persecution of the police increased. After the world-war began, the people became more violent even than the police. Two or three incidents will tell the story of the next ten years of my work.

"I had real fun once at Ann Arbor, Michigan. When I arrived there I found a Bedlam. Five hundred students, with whistles, bells, horns, and every other imaginable device to make noise, howled and screamed and insisted they would not permit me to speak. There was only one other woman save myself who had ventured into



the hall. It looked very threatening. Some of the students suggested that we call the police, to which I did not consent. I decided to pull through the meeting, or to die in the attempt. When I began to speak, the students howled like wolves. I then told them that it was a contest of endurance; that I happened to come from a race which owed its survival to endurance, and that I had all the patience in the world to wait until they should have had their fill of noise. That seemed to have affected them, because they let me go on, with only occasional interruptions. Before I was half through they became intensely interested, and when I finished they gave the College yell for Emma Goldman. From that time I had won the heart of the students, and of Ann Arbor, which I revisited several times a year.

"Between 1910 and 1914 I carried on my work, published *Mother Earth*, and prepared a series of lectures on the drama for publication, without much interruption. But in the summer of that year new trouble began. It was during the free speech fight of the I.W.W. in San Diego, and while I lectured in Los Angeles, that groups of the boys came back to Los Angeles, after they had been cruelly beaten, tarred and feathered, and rushed out of the city. They were in a terrible condition. It was also during that time that one of the boys, Mikolechek, was riddled by bullets by the Vigilantes, and other I.W.W. boys by the hundreds were put into prison. I therefore decided to throw in my lot with them, to go to San Diego, and to take a hand in the fight. I chose as my subject, 'The Enemy of the People,' which seemed to me very appropriate to the San Diego situation. I went there with Ben Reitman. On our arrival we found a mob of a thousand people. I had no idea that they came to

'welcome' me. We quietly pushed through and went to the auto-'bus of the Grand Hotel. I must have been recognised, because a wild rush for the 'bus was made. Well-dressed women stood up in their automobiles and screamed:

" 'Turn her over to us; we'll tear her rotten tongue out of her; we'll tear her to pieces.'

"Fortunately, the driver retained his presence of mind. He dashed along the street like mad, so we managed to escape the wild mob for the moment. Arriving in the hotel, we were rushed up to the top floor, and locked in rooms. We knew it was dangerous to communicate with any of our friends, and there was no way of getting in touch with anybody, so we simply waited on events. At seven o'clock in the evening the manager of the hotel came to my room to say that the Police Chief wanted to see me. Accompanied by Reitman, I went down to the office, but there found seven men standing about in a circle. I was told that the Chief and the State Attorney were in the next room, and that they wanted to see me, and *not* *Reitman*. When I reached the room, I found a lot of officials; one of them pointed to the street, black with people, and then said:

" 'We have no way of controlling the mob, so, if you value your life, you will have to get out of town.'

"I asked the man to let me address the audience from the window; that I was sure I could pacify it. But he would not have it. I then said that I would not leave the city, and that I wished to go back to my room. There was no interference. On the way to the elevator, I passed the room where I had left Reitman. It was empty. I demanded to know what had become of him; but no one would give me information. I paced my

own room until two in the morning, trying to decide what to do, when again the manager of the hotel came to me. He assured me that Reitman was safe and now on the way to Los Angeles. He said that he had given me protection as long as he could, but if I remained I would jeopardise his life, as the Vigilantes had threatened him if I did not leave town. Of course, I decided to go. At the station I had an encounter with some of the Vigilantes, and would probably have lost my life if the railway men had not come to my rescue. They almost carried me to the compartment of the train, locked the doors, and stood guard in front of it.

"When I came to Los Angeles, there was no Reitman. But during the day I received a long-distance telephone that he would arrive in the evening. He had to be taken off the train on a stretcher. He was in a terrible condition, bruised all over, and with the tar and feathers still sticking to him. We then heard his story:

"As soon as I left the room, it appeared, the seven men threw themselves on Reitman, gagged and bound him, dragged him out through the back entrance into a waiting automobile, with seven occupants. On the outskirts of the city there was another automobile, also with seven occupants. Reitman was driven thirty miles out of San Diego, was then stripped, terribly beaten, the letters I.W.W. burned on his back with a lighted cigar, then he was subjected to appalling humiliations, finally tarred and feathered, and told never to return to San Diego. The men said to him:

"'You think we are working men; we are bankers, lawyers, doctors, American patriots; we will teach you damned foreigners.'

"That closed the first San Diego experience.

"And worse was to come. Early in 1916 I was arrested for birth-control activities. I had lectured on birth-control for many years; in fact, was the first woman in America to treat the subject before large audiences; but I had never discussed methods publicly. In 1916 I decided to go to the limit. I was arrested, placed under bail, and held for trial for disseminating knowledge on birth-control. I conducted my own trial, but was convicted, of course, and given either \$100 fine, or two weeks in the Queen's County jail. I preferred the latter. I needed the rest badly; besides I had to prepare a number of lectures on the war and on some literary subjects. The jail was the best place to work in.

"After my release, I went on my annual tour, which took me to California. San Francisco was always a very good field for my work. The first week of this visit was record-breaking; then, on the 22nd of July, a bomb was thrown in the Preparedness Parade. Immediately Alexander Berkman's and my name were connected with the act. Berkman, who had lived in San Francisco for a year, and was publishing *The Blast*, had his place raided, and was "grilled" for hours as to the bomb; needless to say, neither he nor I knew anything about it.

"I continued for three weeks longer after the explosion, but my meetings were attended mostly by detectives.

"The strain and the anxiety affected my health. I left San Francisco, determined to take a vacation—the first in many years. I went to Provincetown, Mass., where my niece had a cottage. But the situation in San Francisco, and the condition of the arrested people—Mooney and the others—necessitated immediate action. No San Francisco lawyer would take their case at the time. I was bombarded by letters and telegrams to go to New

York to secure an attorney for Mooney. There was nothing else to do but to give up the vacation and again throw myself into work. It was a terrible year, and we all expected that Mooney and the others would lose their lives. Indeed, they came near doing so; that they remained alive is due, to a large extent, to the incessant activities of Alexander Berkman, who travelled up and down the land, knocking at every labour organisation, arousing the liberal and radical elements, and making of the Mooney case an international affair.

"My work grew steadily more difficult, more dangerous.

"In 1917, when there was talk of America's entering the war, we organised a Non-Conscription League. That was on the 9th of May; on the evening of the 18th, just after Wilson had declared war on Germany, the League held its first large meeting. In June, *Mother Earth* magazine came out with a cartoon portraying democracy as a corpse. *Mother Earth* declared itself against registration, conscription, and the war. On the 4th of June, the eve of registration, we had a large meeting in the Bronx. For blocks the people crowded to get into the hall. The police came out with machine guns, searchlights, and every other means to create a riot; but the people kept perfect self-restraint. The only rioters were drunken sailors and soldiers. Then, on the 14th of June, we had another meeting on the East Side. There were no serious disturbances anywhere, but there were large crowds who hated America's entry into the war, and who were enthusiastic about those who had the courage to give voice to their opposition.

"The 15th of June, fourteen detectives came to the office of *Mother Earth* and *The Blast* (which, by the



way, had been removed to New York). Both places were raided, most of our literature, manuscripts and documents confiscated, and Berkman and I were arrested. The rest everyone knows. What I have written here gives merely the bare facts of the difficult life I have led for many years. In fact, I can say that for twenty years I never knew, until the last minute before getting on the platform, whether my meeting would take place or whether I should be dragged off to prison. But, as I have often said, if you have a sense of humour, you can survive everything. Besides, the art of an agitator of unpopular ideas consists in the ability to accept the station-house or a hotel with the same grace.

"Nietzsche said that 'the criterion of love is the power of endurance.' If so, America deserves my passionate love, for it has made me endure a thousand hells, but it has also given me what is best and finest in America—men and women of ideas, of character, and of a passionate devotion to the struggle for liberty; so I have no complaints to make." Thus ends Miss Goldman's story.

Now, what are the dangerous ideas which so-called free America punishes with imprisonments and torturings and banishment, though its very Constitution pledges its judges and its people never to interfere with freedom of speech or of the press or of public meeting? Miss Goldman is in favour of birth-control; but birth-control is preached by the State in Denmark, and can be advocated in any European country except Great Britain, without let or hindrance.

She speaks against militarism, too, and Government; but throughout Christendom that is allowed, save in the Benighted States.



The truth seems to be that she speaks very simply and plainly, in language understood of the people, and has the popular gift of getting large and enthusiastic audiences. Here is the gist of what she says:

"The State is not an organism, but an arbitrary institution cunningly imposed on the masses. The schools, too, are barracks where the child is drilled into submission to 'various social and moral spooks and thus fitted to continue our system of exploitation and oppression. . . .' An organism in the true sense cannot be composed of nonentities, but of self-conscious intelligent individualities."

On reading this I ventured to question Miss Goldman and tried to find out exactly what she understands as Anarchy, and how the co-operative Commonwealth of the future can be made to function.

Her ideal, it seems to me, is based on the assumption that the majority of individuals constituting the State are intelligent and reasonable. One would have thought that her experiences at San Diego alone would have been sufficient to convince her of the absolute falsity of this premise. She herself tells how bankers, lawyers, doctors, and business men turned fiends and torturers when excited by the herd-sentiment. She would be the last person to expect sweet reasonableness from the many: but the fault in her reasoning only throws into clearer light her dauntless courage and noble idealism.

I then asked Miss Goldman for an account of her activities in the United States after 1917, when she and Berkman were again sentenced to prison. She was tried in New York. At the outset Miss Goldman said to her judge: "For the first time, the accusation against me is true. I advised the people not to register; I begged them

not to engage as soldiers: I am against all war, and hate all conscription." A Jewish judge, Mayer, to his eternal disgrace, gave her the maximum penalty of two years, though she protested that she did not believe in trying to overthrow the Government by force, but by persuasion. She has told herself what she suffered in prison, though blessed with a most intelligent and humane warder. The under-warder, however, was a woman who took pleasure in punishing, and did her best to make the prison into a hell. But Miss Goldman's courage and self-control brought her safely through.

The one reward of the heroic soul is that the tasks grow harder, the thorny, upward way ever more arduous to the end. At long last Emma Goldman was to be tried as with fire. After serving two years in prison, Emma was deported, with Alexander Berkman and some 247 Anarchists, in the crazy leaky *Buford* to Russia. She went, she tells us, full of enthusiasm: she had admired the Soviets from a distance; they were the embodiment of the Russian Revolution, she believed; all the idealism of the Russian character had come to power in them; surely now they would establish a Communist Commonwealth, the Kingdom of Man upon Earth.

For nearly two years her friends in the United States heard nothing of much value from her; rumours, it is true, of discontent, but nothing precise or positive. Then with infinite difficulty she and Berkman got out of Russia, and at once the first authentic picture of the Soviet Government came to us; and, to our surprise, it held an absolute condemnation of Lenin and his methods. Her articles on the Soviet rulers constitute perhaps the noblest act of Emma Goldman's heroic life. Two points stand

out for ever undeniable in her tremendous indictment of the Soviet leaders she had defended time and again, and praised when it was disastrous to her to praise them.

Lenin, she declares, destroyed the co-operative movement in Russia and shut up its 15,000 shops; Lenin invented the infamous Tcheka, and gave it more power than the secret police of the Tsar to torture, imprison, exile, and murder without form of law or the formality even of a hearing. Lenin, the pinchbeck Robespierre, went even further in tyrannical misuse of power than any Tsar or even than the capitalist despotism of the United States. In November, 1921, the Tcheka began to deport native-born Russians, chiefly the *intelligentsia*, and make outcasts of Russia's noblest. The whole story is the most impressive account yet written of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet despots.

Naturally Miss Goldman begins with the massacre of the revolutionary Russian sailors at Kronstadt, the very men who put Lenin in power, "the heart and hands," as Trotzky called them, of the Revolution. When they ventured to take sides with the Petrograd proletariat and to ask for free elections, Trotzky led the Red Army against them and slaughtered 18,000 of his most convinced and honest supporters.

One would have thought that the mere publication of these facts, the reverence they show for the truth, as she sees it, at all costs, would have reinstated Miss Goldman in the eyes of the American authorities. But, alas! these men take their orders from Wall Street, and money has no entrails of pity, but only of greed.

Will England too be obdurate, or will she, the old home of individual freedom, honour herself by affording an

asylum to the greatest woman of this time—a second and greater St. Paul—or is Emma Goldman going to her crucifixion? Who shall say?

When I read her this, she laughed: "You may call me a female Paul," she said, "but Saint Paul was a Puritan, and at any rate I am not so foolish as that."

Thank God there is no trace of folly in her, or prudery; she has warmed both hands at the fire of life, and, in spite of having spent herself in the service of her fellows, she has had a full, warm, pulsing life of her own.

What a life she has lived!—a life of change, adventure, and constant danger; a life of astonishing vicissitudes, all gilded with love. Emma Goldman makes no scruple of confessing it: she tells you that all her life she has loved love, and she boasts with sufficient justification that, though she may have changed her lovers, they are all faithful to her still, after twenty or thirty years. And all the while she has been learning; she now knows Russian, as well as English, German, and French, and is versed in their literatures: Emma Goldman is probably the best-read woman I have ever met, and though persecuted as few have ever been persecuted, she remains kindly, tolerant, full of excuses even for her tormentors. In a letter to me from prison in 1919 she gave her real faith: "In our age there is nothing so useless as a spirit of white-heat with a vision of a glorious future, a spirit which cannot and will not accept an inglorious present. But my ideal is ever real to me. What, then, does prison matter? What do all the other follies and stupidities of those who have power matter? I have four months still to pass in my cell, then to the larger prison, which does not give much more breathing-space to the soul."

I have told her life of struggle and insult in the States

at perhaps undue length because I wished Americans to realise how far they have deserted the ideal of individual liberty established in the Constitution by Washington and Jefferson and consecrated by Lincoln. Under Wilson the American Republic sank lower in despotic violence than any tyranny yet known among men. And it has not recovered since the war: in this year 1923 Upton Sinclair was arrested and thrown into prison for reading a part of the Constitution on a vacant plot of land. A short time ago an innocent Italian threw himself from the 14th story of the Municipal Building in New York to escape the tortures of the infamous "third degree" inflicted on him by American policemen.

The chief difference between the tyranny of Wilson and that of Lenin is that the one uses violence to prevent wrong from being righted and the other uses violence in a wild attempt to right the wrong.

Emma Goldman has been savagely maltreated by both to her eternal honour!

## XIX

### GARGOYLES

GERHARDT HAUPTMANN, AND DR. BISCHOFF

IN the winter of 1922, "Biberpelz," one of the less well-known plays of Gerhardt Hauptmann, was given in Berlin and honoured by the presence of the great dramatist, who saw the play from start to finish from a box on the grand tier. At the end of the play, the principal actor bowed to Hauptmann, and the whole house rose cheering, while Hauptmann, coming to the front of the box, bowed his thanks repeatedly.

Hauptmann looked his sixty years of age: he is rather small, with a great forehead, rather like the effigy of Shakespeare. As a friend had promised to introduce me to him next day, I contented myself for the moment by noting the quiet good taste with which he accepted the thunderous applause of the audience. As soon as he decently could, he left the box and the theatre.

The play had disappointed me greatly: it seemed to me curiously one-sided and untrue. It will be worth while, I think to explain my repulsion:

It opens well: an ordinary bare office with three desks, one for a writer, one near the door for a soldier-servant, and the chief one for the head of the bureau, the Amtsvorsteher himself. As the curtain went up, the clerk came into the office, hung up his hat and overcoat, went to his desk, and began his work. A minute or two later



the soldier came in, greeted the writer formally, and sat down at his desk. Five minutes afterwards in came the Amtsvorsteher, the Chief Bureaucrat: he handed his hat and stick to the soldier, and then posed before the glass, admiring himself: he was a large man, with a prominent stomach and hair growing thin on the top; after pulling his clothes in order, he took out a small comb and, going close to the glass, arranged his thin hair; then he combed his moustache, and after preening himself like a peacock, he went over to his desk, sat down, and began carelessly turning over some papers.

A moment's silence while the clerk and soldier worked silently, then the Chief asked a question contemptuously, the clerk rose humbly and replied with the utmost deference; the Chief began to find fault; humbly the clerk pointed out that the Chief had overlooked something; the Chief snarled and returned to his desk.

Then a man came in with a grievance; he wanted to state that his beaver coat had been stolen, and he would be greatly obliged if the Chief of Police would set enquiries on foot. The Chief wanted particulars, had not patience enough to listen, and finally told the clerk to take down all the details. Again and again he interrupted the complainant's story with silly questions, and when the complainant began to answer curtly, the Chief became impertinent and then rude, and at length told him that his story seemed to be too improbable to be worth investigating.

The complainant went out, saying he would soon send witnesses who would establish his good faith and the truth of his story, and he surely kept his word: for half an hour or more there came a stream of witnesses—maid-servants, gardeners, and passers-by; but the Chief treated

them all disdainfully, and every now and then confided to his clerk that he wasn't to be taken in by cock-and-bull stories, and went on making himself out more and more absurd and brainless, till one wondered how Hauptmann had ever thought it worth while to concern himself with such a caricature of humanity. The details were piled up; the incredible stupidity and malevolent vanity of the Chief so displayed and harped upon, that the play became dull. Yet I noticed that the audience, especially in the stalls, responded to every additional proof of the Chief's brutal incapacity.

I could not help asking an older man, who was seated next to me, whether the caricature was not too forced: "Oh no," he assured me, "our Prussian officials are like that, just like that; we all know them, the type of the brutal non-commissioned officer, and indeed of the commissioned officer too," he added, "as we all have learned to our cost."

I wanted some relief to the denunciation, yet no relief came: Hauptmann piled Pelian on Ossa to show his hatred and contempt of the petty Prussian official.

And I was soon to discover for myself that the Amtsvorsteher just as stupid and brutal was everywhere to be found in Berlin.

I was living in the Fuerstenhof Hotel, and in my room I had a telephone. One day it went out of order, and I could not make it function.

I went downstairs to the office and complained, asking that it be put in order at once.

The young clerk begged me to go to the Director's room opposite, and state my grievance there. I did: the Director heard me impatiently, and then said: "What have I to do with that?" (*was geht denn das mich an?*).

"I was told to come to you," I said, "by the clerk at the desk."

"He's an imbecile," cried the Director; "I have something else to do than bother over telephones!" He not only spoke with excessive rudeness, but he walked out of the room without another word, as if I had been an importunate beggar. I could not but say to myself Hauptmann was justified. Here was another Amtsvorsteher. I told the clerk I insisted that the telephone should be fixed, as I was charged extra for it; but, as nothing was done, I left the Fuerstenhof next day and went into lodgings, where I could at least be certain of ordinary civility, at about one-twentieth of the cost of the hotel.

My next experience, however, was far more convincing, for I was destined to meet a much worse specimen of German bureaucrat. I had published my "Life of Oscar Wilde" in Berlin in English, and learned later that I had to get an export permit, or *Ausfuhrs Erlaubniss*, to take the copies out of the country, paying, besides, about ten per cent. of the cost for the permission. Suddenly the tax was increased to ninety per cent., which put a very different complexion on the matter. First of all, it was retroactive legislation, my book being already printed, and no Government is supposed to penalise you in that way. Knowing Herrn Dernburg, who had been in 1915 a special German envoy in the United States, I went to him and asked him to help me, if possible. He agreed with me that I should pay the ten per cent. tax at most. In a few days I got a letter from him, asking me to call upon a Dr. Bischoff, who was at the head of the Press Bureau of the Foreign Office, and he would help me to get fair-play.

I went there, and was received courteously by Dr.

Bischoff, a good-looking, well-turned-out man of perhaps forty or so. I explained my case to him at some length; he said at length, with a smile, "Even after paying this tax, you would have your books printed here cheaper than anywhere else."

I didn't see that this had anything to do with the principle of the matter; but I met his objection by assuring him that he was mistaken. In Belgium or in the French provinces I could have got my "Oscar Wilde" printed more cheaply, because I had had all the additional expense of living in a Berlin hotel, whereas I should have been at home if I had given it to a French printer.

I could not convince him: time and again he talked of German cheapness and efficiency, till at last I confessed that the "efficiency" left much to be desired in my case; that the printing even of the "Oscar Wilde" was deplorable. "Why did you go to a cheap printer?" he countered contemptuously. In fact, he was argumentative to an extreme on a point that seemed to me entirely beside the question, and at length I had to ask him point-blank whether he could give me the *Ausführs Erlaubniss* at the old rate or not.

He shrugged his shoulders: it wasn't in his department; I should see Herr So-and-so, and he gave me the name of another official in the Wilhelmstrasse. I had wasted an hour on Dr. Bischoff, and came away with the feeling that he loved argumentative quibbling and cared nothing for right or justice. He seemed to think it quite honest that the German Government should impose any tax it pleased, at any time, and that private German firms should put up their prices at will, even after a part had already been paid. Yet the man must have been educated: how could he quibble like that?

In due course I saw the other official, who told me that Herr Doktor Bischoff could recommend a diminution of the tax to the Minister if he wished: apparently I had not convinced the Doktor. At the end of another hour, he told me he could do nothing; I had better address the Minister, if Herr Doktor Bischoff wouldn't help me. In due course I saw the Minister, who was very polite, and ended up by saying he would go into the matter with Dr. Bischoff.

I left almost in despair!

Still, I had yet another string to my bow.

I had known Graf Bernstorff well in the United States from 1915 on till the entrance of America into the war early in 1917. Bernstorff had been born and bred in England; didn't leave it till he was twelve years of age, for his father was Ambassador at the Court of St. James, and he returned there as an *attaché* when he was twenty-one or twenty-two. He always declared that English country life was the best in the world, and he spoke English as well as he spoke German. We had been great friends in New York and in Washington, and in my dilemma I wrote to him, asking him to use his influence to get justice done to me. He immediately replied that he would write at once to the Minister in the strongest terms, and that, as he was coming to Berlin in a week or two, he would take the matter up with him personally if it hadn't already been decided by his letter.

In a few days I got a letter from Dr. Bischoff, asking me, in a cordial manner, to come to see him; he felt he must now act for me, as Graf Bernstorff had written so warmly in my favour and about my books.

I went again to see Dr. Bischoff; he insisted on reading me Bernstorff's letter, and, when he had finished, he



struck the sheet dramatically, exclaiming: "Dieser Brief von Graf Bernstorff ist fuer mich massgebend." (This letter of Count Bernstorff settles the matter as far as I am concerned.)

"I'm glad to hear it," I cried, smiling; "will you, then, give me the permission to export it?"

"I can't give that," he said, drawing himself up; "I can only recommend the Minister to give it."

"Will you do it at once?" I asked.

"Tell me what the books are," he said, "and all about them, and I'll do my best to satisfy Graf Bernstorff."

I told him I had had printed a couple of thousand of "The Life and Confessions of Oscar Wilde"; I had sold 50,000 of them in the United States; had brought over the plates; it was the same book. Would he get me the "permit" for these volumes, as the others weren't ready yet?

"I must read the book," he said; "please send me a copy." "Certainly," I replied, "but it's in two volumes; it will take you a long time, I fear."

"I must read the book," he said pompously, "before I can recommend it."

"But you know very little English, you said," I interjected, "and I've been waiting already for weeks."

"Is there anything in the book I shouldn't read?" he asked, sneeringly.

"Not a word," I replied; "Bernstorff has twice offered to write an 'Introduction' praising it, if it is ever translated into German; and you said, I thought, that Bernstorff's judgment settled the matter for you."

He sprang up. "You must not so construe my words," he cried angrily; "I allow no one to fetter my judgment;



if you want your book passed, you'll send me a copy at once and await my decision." The manner of his speech was so rude that the words were a challenge: I answered it at once.

In the month that had elapsed since I got Dernburg to write to him, I had found out that a little palm-grease would get me all the "export permits" I wanted in forty-eight hours. With this certainty in my head, I went on, just to see what sense of justice there was in Dr. Bischoff. "I'm not asking any favour," I began; "it is three months since I gave the order to print and bind these books; I want to pay the export tax that was in force when I gave the order; that's all. Any civilised Government would recognise the justice of that claim."

"It's a pity you didn't pick the Government of the United States as civilised, where they'd put you in prison for daring to criticise the Government." Dr. Bischoff's manner was now as offensive as it could be.

I preferred to keep strictly to the question. "May I ask for some answer to my request?" I asked; "I have waited now for an answer for over a month, at great expense and loss."

"I've no answer to give," he replied, and got up from his seat, evidently as a sign to end the conversation; "till I have read the book, I can give no opinion on it."

"If I sent it you in the German translation," I said, "would you give me an answer in a week?"

"I can say nothing as to the time," he replied; "I refuse to bind myself in any way."

"You must remember, Dr. Bischoff," I replied, quietly, "that I am much older than you are, and that I am the sufferer through a new law and have waited a long time——"

He interrupted rudely, while walking over to the door, and these were his words:

"Your years haven't added to your wisdom," he sneered; "I've had enough of this discussion."

Then, for the first time, I took my tone from his, and replied as rudely as he had spoken:

"I shall tell Graf Bernstorff," I answered, following him to the door, "that his letter, *massgebend* though it was, brought me nothing but personal insult."

"Tell him what you like," cried Herr Dr. Bischoff, raising his voice to a shout at the open door, apparently so that his subordinates might hear, and I went my way.

It is extremely difficult to tell the whole unvarnished truth about a verbal quarrel; words are so coloured by tone and gesture that even exact reporting might give a completely false presentation of the facts; but it is hard for anyone to justify the snob-tone of Dr. Bischoff's eulogy of Graf Bernstorff's letter as *massgebend* with the direct insult, "Your years haven't added to your wisdom."

Just because I have fought with my pen constantly for justice to Germany, though I could never defend the Kaiser or German policy, so now I want to put it on record that the *Amtsvorsteher* of Hauptmann is justified; clothed in a little brief authority, the German official, whether as manager of a hotel or at the head of an important branch of the Foreign Office, does play such fantastic tricks before High Heaven as make the angels weep. Shakespeare scourged this tendency of human nature; but Shakespeare had never seen a Dr. Bischoff—the worst specimen of the genus I've met in fifty years, the most brainless and the rudest.

I wrote to Bernstorff, just saying that I could not get any answer, and thanking him for his courteous inter-

cession. He wrote, assuring me that he would continue his efforts; but a day or two later I found an intermediary who for some twenty dollars got me an "export permit" in forty-eight hours, and so showed me the true obverse to the intolerable Bischoff; for in this world, where vile rudeness is given power, illegalities or bye-roads of fraud will always be found to smooth the ways of legitimate business.

Some months later I received another letter from Graf Bernstorff, telling me that, after much trouble, he had got me the "export permit," but when he sent it to me in Berlin he found that I had left my lodgings and left Germany. As I stayed in Berlin nearly a month after getting my books out of the country, it must be admitted that German bureaucrats are slow to yield, even to their own superiors.

As in the war Ludendorff's idiot belief in the efficacy of the unrestricted U-boat campaign brought Germany to disaster, so here one brainless official could render inefficacious the best efforts of a great Ambassador.

I must leave it to others to explain why the German is worse than the official of any other nation; I am sure of the fact: the German is inclined to use power more despotically than either the Englishman or the American; the Englishman has got the aristocratic ideal of the courteous gentleman engrained in him, and the American is saved by his sense of human equality. Nowhere else in the world save in Berlin does one meet *Amtsvorsteher* such as Dr. Bischoff.

## XX

### GARGOYLES

ROOSEVELT, WILSON, AND HARDING

**B**EFORE writing my first Contemporary Portrait, that of Thomas Carlyle, I made up my mind only to write of men I loved and admired, these being the only ones it seemed to me whom I might have known truly. But as the years went on, my original purpose suffered the detraction of time: I felt it a duty to warn readers of Kipling's patriotic limitations, and when George Moore wrote about Jesus as from a café in the Place Pigalle, I could not but protest.

Since I have passed the three-score years allotted to man, the disillusionment has gone on apace. I had a *high ideal of America, drawn from my life* in the Middle-West as a youth. When I returned, nearly forty years afterwards, I was confounded by a change of spirit which disappointed me acutely. It was hard to make me believe that Americans would treat the First Amendment to the Constitution as a dead letter, and abandon that noble belief in liberty of speech and the public criticism of Government, which appeared to me the very foundation of the authority and the essence of patriotic pride.

To my horror, Wilson's "Espionage Act" became law: not a single spy was ever discovered by its help; but thousands of honourable and conscientious citizens were thrown into prison, many of them brutally tortured and

foully done to death, through its provisions. Women who came together to ask for amnesty were driven off Fifth Avenue, New York. Wilson made himself the subservient instrument of his capitalist masters: Wall Street gave orders, and the White House ratified the decisions of the hoarders of the dollar.

The shame of it ate into my very soul; the ferocious stupidity of it sickened me. For months I hoped and believed that, as soon as Wilson had been rejected by the people—and I felt sure he would be rejected and thrown disdainfully out of office—he would be indicted for violating the Constitution; but no one even proposed such a vindication of the American spirit, and Warren Harding took his place as President of the Republic and proceeded to make himself even more responsible for the assassination of freedom than Wilson himself. For Harding kept conscientious objectors to war in prison even after both France and England had passed Amnesty Acts and opened the prison-gates. Warren Harding in the White House, Daugherty as Attorney-General, Hoover as Secretary of State, while Eugene Debs and Jim Larkin were confined in cells! The Republic founded by Washington and Jefferson, and consecrated by Lincoln, had passed away; the leaky *Buford* had taken the place of the *Mayflower*.

I made up my mind to do what I could to stigmatise the degrading change: I had met and known Roosevelt, Wilson, and Harding; I would write of them as I had found them, the true truth as I saw it, so that America should know the very souls of the pigmies it is seeking to honour; and so for the vast cathedral of humanity I chiselled these three "Gargoyles" with cold rage and hate. Thank God, I don't need to draw on imagination

in any smallest particular; I hate Wilson, while I despise Harding and smile at Roosevelt; but I am, nevertheless, sure that Wilson's best, his highest reach of soul, was far above that of his predecessor or his successor. It was his ineffable conceit that brought him to such disaster as never befell a man since Judas hanged himself.

But Life had taken it in hand to correct my conceit. Finding myself a voice crying in the wilderness, I left the United States and came over to study Europe. I was appalled by what I found: before the war was ended, in the spring of 1918 I had written that I dreaded the results of the long and desperate struggle: it is to be feared, I said, that the victors will assume the worst vices of the conquered, and one can only hope that the beaten will try to assimilate some high virtue of the victors, for the truth stands: "*Those whom He loveth, He chasteneth.*"

At first it looked as if my surmise would be realised: Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Wilson, after signing the Armistice, brought the payment of pensions into the so-called Peace Treaty, and forced the Germans to sign a promise to pay at the very least five times beyond their power—a most disgraceful and dishonourable extortion. But the Germans seemed unable to appeal to any honourable code: their own vile work at the Peace of Brest Litovsk stood in the way: as they had treated the beaten Russians, they themselves were being treated: "*With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again.*"

Fate led me to Germany in 1922, and a new disillusionment was prepared for me. I had spent four years in Germany as a student, one year as a Corps-student in order to realise and exhaust German University life. I remember about 1880 meeting a lieutenant of the Guard



in Berlin who rather impressed me: he was so different to anyone of the same class I had met in the United States or in England that I was eager to form an exact opinion of him: his manner, even to his friends, was exceedingly frank and outspoken. He confided to me one day that his object in life was to be an ideal Prussian officer; and when I asked him what that meant, he told me he had to be *schneidig* (cutting), always *schneidig*! The word struck me; it went perfectly with the goose-step, and seemed to me horrible. I parted from him, saying to myself: the man or the race whose ambition it is in this world to be "cutting," is going to have a devilish bad time of it. But I was destined, in Berlin in 1922, to meet a bureaucrat who extended and intensified my knowledge of the Prussian officer, and I have added this one "Gargoyle" of a Hun to the Gargoyles of our three Presidents.

And I do this very deliberately. I had idealised America, because I had known it as a boy, forty years ago; I had idealised the Germans too, because I had known them in youth. After their conduct at Brest Litovsk, I was bound to study them again dispassionately and tell the truth about them. If I make "Gargoyles" of my own people in the cause of truth, surely I must be at least as free of prejudice in the case of the Germans.

Let no one think I condemned the Germans hastily. In 1922 I spent six months in Germany, the greater part of the time in Berlin, but I went on visits from Dantzic to Essen, and from Vienna to Heidelberg, and studied the people everywhere as carefully as I could. The impression made on me was disappointing: in the Gargoyle of Herrn Doktor Bischoff, the head of the Press Bureau of

the Foreign Office, I sum up my latest understanding of German faults: I have not darkened the picture; I assure my readers that I have treated him with as much sympathy as I shall treat Roosevelt. But I will not conceal my opinion that I came to regard him as one of the worst human beings it has ever been my ill-fortune to meet—brutal, insolent, brainless, snobbery even became a virtue in his curious bureaucratic make-up.

Now for my Gargoyles: I first met Theodore Roosevelt at Lady Jeune's in London. We were both young men, but he had already done notable things, had made himself Leader of the Legislature of the State of New York, and had written on the war of 1812 and on ranching. His appearance attracted me: though only medium height, he was broad and evidently strong; vigour and vitality, indeed, were the essence of him; the rough ugliness of his face, with the prominent teeth and outjutting jaws, and small glass-darkened eyes, interested me. As soon as he knew that I was an American and had been a cowboy, though now a London editor, he became confidential, and asked me for information about this man and about that. Next day he came to lunch with me, and we talked till late in the afternoon: he wanted to understand England, he said, and so I told him I'd arrange a dinner at which he should meet three or four of the chief personalities of the time; and in due course the dinner came off.

I had invited a famous athlete (W. G.), an Egyptian administrator, an old Indian official, an American correspondent, and a well-known Peer, a leader of the Upper House.

With English *flair* and courtesy, my guests one and all played up to Roosevelt, and drew him out by their frank

admiration. He began by talking well about life on a Western ranch, and interested everybody. Riding was the best of all exercises, he declared; W. G., on the other hand, wondered whether it was better than fencing, which called all parts of the body into play—hand and foot and eye; but Roosevelt wouldn't hear of any comparison, and, to everyone's amusement, told W. G. that he (Roosevelt) spoke as an athlete, in ignorance of the fact that W. G. was probably the best of living athletes.

In a little while he gave the Egyptian official his views about Egypt, and was emphatic on the way the fellaheen should be treated; in due course the Indian administrator came in for a lecture on the blunders of the English in India; and finally Roosevelt assured us that America was destined to play the chief rôle among the nations, and that the pre-eminence of the United States would lead to the Millenium. The American journalist—a man of genius—remarked drily that lynchings were still the order of the day in the Southern States, and at length startled even Roosevelt by declaring that he believed with Schopenhauer that the English were the most highly civilised of all nations—"the only people," he concluded in a fine phrase, "politically grown up."

At this Roosevelt almost forgot his manners, and even when he learned who the journalist was, he could only shrug his shoulders and confess that he could not understand how any American could come to such a conclusion. A little later he excused himself and went away. I accompanied him to the door and waited till he got his cab: he was kind enough to say that he had enjoyed himself immensely, but added that he could never bear to hear an American running down his own people: "There are so few who understand us," he said, "it's a pity when

those who should emphasize our virtues, advertise on our faults."

A few minutes later the old Peer got up, and naturally I went with him to the door while he donned his overcoat; suddenly he turned to me: "You said that Roosevelt was a typical American," he remarked; "do you mean by that that he is typical of the best in America, as W. G. upstairs is, I think, typical of the best in England?" "Yes," I replied; "he's extraordinarily typical—even of the best." "Goodness," said Lord R., "what a dreadful country America must be."

"That's not a fair judgment," I countered; "the working classes in America are the finest in the world."

"But no leaders; cocksure ignorance in high place," said Lord R.; and I could not contradict him.

Roosevelt's self-sufficiency was not his worst fault: his conduct from 1914 till America entered the war in 1917 can never be excused or defended. He was so eager to find fault with Wilson that he gradually destroyed the great influence he possessed; and when he died untimely, his death left no gap. His foolish misjudgments, too, will always be remembered against him: fancy any American calling Thomas Paine, the author of "The Crisis," "a dirty little Atheist"! The truth is, Roosevelt was neither a good nor a great man; and I cannot help believing that his continual incitement to war, had a good deal to do with President Wilson's astonishing right-about-turn!

#### WOODROW WILSON

From 1914 on I formed a high opinion of President Wilson: his determination, so often expressed, to keep the United States out of the war seemed to me the only

sane policy. I used to quote Franklin's declaration with intense approval: "There never was a good war or a bad peace." . . . I can hardly say when I first began to doubt Wilson's protestations. Soon after the outbreak of war, he declared that the blockade of Germany by Great Britain was "incomplete, and therefore illegal"; yet he did nothing to protect American ships carrying milk to German children.

Turner's summing-up of Wilson \* is conclusive:

"It was Wilson who sent the 'strict accountability' Note; Wilson's uncompromising attitude that caused the resignation of Secretary of State Bryan. . . .

"It was Wilson who led the preparedness agitation, who oversaw the drafting of bills providing for the largest military and naval appropriations ever expended by any nation in the world in peace-time, and urged these bills through Congress.

"It was Wilson who omitted to hold England to the strict accountability which he exacted from Germany; Wilson who broke off diplomatic relations when Germany announced its purpose of waging submarine warfare unrestricted; Wilson who rejected Germany's offer to reopen relations looking towards a continuation of American neutrality. It was Wilson who requested from Congress the power to engage in hostilities at his own discretion; Wilson who, when that request was not acceded to, assumed the power that Congress had failed to grant, and placed public fighting men upon private ships. It was Wilson who finally demanded of Congress a declaration of war against Germany.

"Wilson could have kept America out of the war.

\* *Shall It Be Again?* (Huebsch, New York) by T. K. Turner, the book that discovers Wilson's very soul.



"The truth is, he brought America into the war; and is responsible, besides, for the infamous peace."

The same author does not hesitate to go further :

"No one, having read the secret treaties, will maintain that the Entente Governments ever intended to carry out their agreement to make peace on the 'Wilson terms.' . . .

"A number of the secret treaties were published a year before the Armistice was signed. Though he continued his pledges of a peace of equality, Wilson did not require their repudiation. The salient fact of the whole matter is that, having lured the Germans into the net with the 'Wilson terms,' Wilson promptly threw the 'Wilson terms' into the waste-basket, forgot every promise he had made of equality to the German people, provided they should reform their Government, agreed to a peace based on the secret treaties, placed his hand and seal upon almost the entire Entente programme of murder and robbery, and in the end defended this course to his own people as an act of justice and of honour.

"No one else could have done the thing except Wilson. . . . Wilson's work at Paris and Versailles must go down in history as a gigantic treachery, not only to the German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Turkish Governments and the peoples under them, but to all the rest of us; treachery to all subject peoples under the heels of the Entente, to whom he had promised self-determination; treachery to all the independent small States of the world, to whom he had promised freedom from fears of aggression; treachery to the American people and the peoples of the Entente countries, to whom he had promised deliverance from future wars and preparations for war."



Long before reading this I had been startled—not to say shocked—by the man himself. I had been appointed an advertisement agent of the Union Pacific Railroad and of the Chesapeake and Ohio, and had the same position in regard to White Sulphur Springs and its hotel, when President Wilson came to stay with his bride at Hot Springs. Forty or fifty correspondents from the best journals in the States came to Virginia to record his sayings and doings. Naturally, in my position I came to know most of them, and made friends with three or four of the ablest. I was soon astonished to find that, though Wilson had some partisans among the younger men, all the better heads showed dislike of him, and distrust. In private they descanted on his extraordinary conceit and self-centredness, and gave amusing instances illustrating his egomania. They put me on my guard, and I did not seek to be presented to him, fearing lest personal contact might result in prejudicing my judgment.

“At the end of the year an entertainment was got up by the coloured servants in the hotel, and they requested the honour of the presence of President Wilson and his bride. The President accepted: the show was given in the hall of the hotel, and, as luck would have it, I was allotted a place beside Lord and Lady Aberdeen, *vis-à-vis* with President Wilson and his buxom bride, so that I could study both their faces at close range without discourtesy. They were hardly two yards away, and at once I was struck by memories called up by Wilson’s face: where had I seen that long, hard jaw and chin, the prominent thin nose, the cold grey eyes, the spare nervous figure?—in Ulster, of course: the Presbyterian minister type accentuated.

The entertainment was astonishingly good, and would

have done honour to any variety stage: in particular, a little negro, pretending to shave a gigantic customer with *castagnettes*, was almost indescribably realistic and funny. In the middle of it Lord Aberdeen rose, and, as I looked around, I saw President Wilson had risen with the First Lady of the Land, and were passing in front of us: Lord Aberdeen bowed low in salute again, and again; Lady Aberdeen curtsied; everyone bowed while the pair disappeared, cutting the programme short: a young performer, who had not had a chance of singing her song, was almost in tears, pouting disappointment. Any Englishman of position in a similar case would have stayed to the end and have thanked the chief actors in person; anyone of heart would have been more cordial; even the German Emperor would not have behaved with such scant courtesy.

A little later Colonel House, whom I knew and liked, wanted me to do a "Pen-Portrait" of Wilson: "One of our very greatest Presidents," he declared; but I was full of doubt. I replied that I could only do a good Portrait after intimate knowledge, and I must love something in my sitter in order to get to the heart of his mystery; in fine, I excused myself, and glad I am that I did.

Dante writes bitterly of the man who made *il gran rifiuto*: Wilson is responsible for the Great Betrayal, and I am more than content to leave the judgment of him to history. "The worst immorality," Napoleon said once to his brother Joseph, "is to accept a great place you are not fit for"; and surely, if anything was ever proven, it was proven that Wilson was not fit to sit as arbiter of peace in a Europe he knew nothing whatever about. Lloyd George was astoundingly ignorant: he knew as lit-

tle about Dantzig as he knew about the Saare or the Ruhr; Clemenceau was astoundingly bitter; but Wilson was more ignorant than Lloyd George and more unfair to Germany than Clemenceau. *Non ragionam di lor' ma guarda e passa.*

## WARREN HARDING

It was towards the end of the Wilson régime that the most astonishing news came to me in New York. The conclusion of peace had called forth a miraculous outburst of altruistic sentiment in all countries, but especially in every part of war-plagued Europe.

Maynard Keynes, of the British Treasury—to his eternal honour—had denounced the financial terms imposed on conquered Germany by the Treaty of Versailles as “fraudulent and dishonourable.” He contrasted them with the terms of the Armistice when Wilson’s twelve at any rate of fourteen points had been universally accepted. It was hoped on all hands that Keynes’s view would be taken both by England and by France. Suddenly the news came to me that Lloyd George had written to Wilson, offering to forgive Europe the eleven milliards owed to England, if America would forgive the five milliards Great Britain owed to her.

It seemed to me the most wonderful proposal, and Wilson, of all men, must accept it. If we were right to go into the war to prevent invasion, as Wilson said, then we had no right to make England pay for defending us for years and years. Besides, most of the debt was sheer profit on munitions, etc., and should be written off. I took up Lloyd George’s proposal with all the enthusiasm I had in me; I wrote and spoke in favour of it, pointing out, too, that America could use it to bring about uni-

versal disarmament: nothing but a police force should be allowed on the high seas, a squadron of ships drawn from every nation; and a police force of armed men, too, should be placed at the disposal of the Hague Peace Court, in order to protect boundaries and keep the nations within their ethnographic limits.

After I had spoken one evening passionately in this sense, saying that America in this way could proclaim a general amnesty and also put an end to war and advance the humanisation of man five thousand years in one day, a lady came to me and advised me to talk to Warren Harding in this way. "He's an earnest Christian," she said; "desires intensely to advance all good causes; he's going to be the next President, and you may really influence him." I hesitated a long time; but when I got a letter from Warren Harding, asking me to come out to see him at Marion, Ohio, I thought it my duty to go. "After all," I said to myself, "it was Lincoln's innate Christianity that made him play the man; perhaps Harding may be of similar stuff."

I went to Marion and visited Harding; the whole town was beflagged in his honour, and both his house and the adjoining house, which he had taken as his headquarters, were filled with a constant stream of visitors from all parts of the country. I was shown into a small waiting-room, and assured by a courteous gentleman that Mr. Harding would see me in a few minutes. On the centre-table there was a large photograph of Warren Harding, more than a foot high and some eight inches broad; I studied the handsome, kindly face for some moments, and then moved to the side; now the photograph showed the mask of Lincoln, and when I went to the other side I found the effigy of George Washington. It seemed to

me extraordinary that a village editor, a man of most moderate ability, according to his senatorial colleagues, should have thought of putting himself between Washington and Lincoln. Suddenly it occurred to me that only a man who knew neither Washington nor Lincoln could possibly be guilty of such a solecism.

Ten minutes later, I was ushered into a small room, where Warren Harding was seated opposite the door at a writing table; he rose and shook hands with me, saying he was very glad to see me, and especially because my introducer had said that the object of my visit was completely altruistic. I confirmed this view, and, thinking that the candidate's time was even more occupied than my own, I started at once *in medias res*:

"Senator Harding," I began, smiling, "I regard you as a desperate reactionary, but your friends assert that you are as honest as Lincoln and have an advantage over Lincoln in that you are a devout Christian. For that reason, I came to see you——"

"Pardon me," Senator Harding broke in, "but I have always been regarded in the Senate by those who knew me as a forward-looking man, and in no sense a reactionary. I remember one occasion on which I was told by some other Senators that I was one of the boldest reformers in the Senate." And Senator Harding was good enough to describe in detail the incident he had adduced, putting in the names of the Senators who had proclaimed his reforming zeal. When he had finished I went on with my thesis.

"I assure you I had no wish to annoy you," I said. "I want to know simply whether I can support you with full conviction or not. If you are a Christian, you must believe in the doctrine of forgiveness, and so I have come



to plead with you, first, on behalf of the conscientious objectors confined in American prisons. There are still some scores of them, though all such prisoners have been freed in France and in England for more than a year. Surely, considering all the circumstances and, above all, the fact that America hardly suffered in the war at all, it should have been possible for a great people like the American to open the prison doors at least as soon as England and France, who had been fighting in terror of their lives."

Senator Harding interrupted me with something like these words:

"You want me to revise the decisions of scores of American judges?" he exclaimed; "the best judges in the world. I can't do any such thing."

I could have answered with Shakespeare's "The quality of mercy is not strained . . . it blesseth him that gives and him that takes"; but clearly the Senator wouldn't even have understood.

"I might reasonably object," I replied, "to your statement that American judges are the best in the world. I hold no brief for French and English judges, but I regard them both as, in the main, better educated and fairer minded than the average American judge, and you must admit that their decisions in this matter are plainly more humane. In England it has been the exception for any judge to give conscientious objectors the uttermost penalty of the law—which is two years' imprisonment. In America the judges appear to be superior to all considerations of humanity. They have given twenty years to mere lads, and fifteen years to a girl in her teens, for infinitesimal offenses of speech, and again and again have



stretched the uttermost severity of the law to breaking-point.

"Now there is a great opportunity for you to show pure Christian feeling that must appeal to everyone. Why not say that Debs should be released? He is an old man, of the noblest character, and has already spent two years in prison. In England he would have been treated at least as well as Bertrand Russell, who, for a virulent and ungraced attack on the American army, which he said was only recruited in order to break up strikes, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, which was immediately changed by the Government into treatment in the first class, allowing him to use his own clothes, receive visits, and bring in his food from the outside. Surely a Christian must see that Debs should be pardoned?"

"I do not see it at all," cried Senator Harding, with indignation in voice and manner. "I regard Debs as a public enemy. Why, he tried to restrain us from going into the war."

"But wouldn't his Captain, Christ, have also pleaded for peace among men?" I interjected. Mr. Harding shrugged his shoulders in speechless anger.

"Do you know Debs?" I asked. "Have you read his speech on the trial?"

"No," exclaimed Senator Harding, still more indignantly. "No, I have not, and I don't want to. I know what everyone knows about him: that he was against the war; that is enough for me."

In the gentlest voice I could assume, I went on:

"I want you to judge Debs by what he said on his trial: 'As long as any man is outcast, I want to be out-

cast too; as long as any man is in prison for opinion's sake, I want to be in prison with him.'

"Such words," I added, "might go into the Sermon on the Mount, and they would be among the fine utterances in it."

In his agitation Senator Harding rose. "I do wish," he said, plaintively, "you wouldn't mix up politics and religion. I do not agree with you. That is all I can say. I wouldn't free Debs \* if I could."

I was greatly disappointed; if I failed here, could I hope to succeed in the larger endeavour? I took heart of grace: I could only do my best; the issue was in other hands. I then asked him whether he had heard of Lloyd George's offer, adding that it had just been rejected by Woodrow Wilson.

"I'm glad to hear that," cried Harding, enthusiastically; "we want to pay our debts, and we require to be paid what is owing to us: that's the foundation of all morality."

"*It's more blessed to give than to receive,*" flashed across my mind. Could I put the proposal to this *bourgeois* moralist, so that he'd listen? I began:

"Duelling was abolished nearly a century ago," I said, "by England; why shouldn't you put an end to war by forgiving all debts, on condition that all the nations disarm? In this way, you'd advance civilisation a thousand years."

"We can't forgive milliards!" said Harding, rising to his feet in his excitement; "I never heard of such a proposition; I'm against it as much as Wilson."

\* The Senator has since declared that he would rather free a yeggman or burglar than a conscientious objector—Barabbas rather than Christ.

"Do you agree with Wilson," I asked, "in his view that, if Germany had beaten the Allies, she would have attacked the United States?"

"Certainly," he said; "the Kaiser aimed at world-domination; the Mexican proposal showed that."

"In that case," I said, not even troubling to contradict an hypothesis without any foundation in fact; "in that case, England in fighting was really defending the United States. Why, then, should we make her pay for the munitions she used in the conflict?"

"A debt's a debt," Harding rejoined, clamping his jaws.

"It seems funny to me," I began again; "at one moment we are making England and the Allies pay for our munitions; then we declare war, and at once begin to give the Allies all the munitions and food they want, and our sons' lives as well; we give, without counting, things more precious far than gold."

He shrugged his shoulders. "It won't go," he replied. "If I'm a trustee for America, I'll see that she gets all the money that's coming to her."

For half an hour I tried my best—now from this side, now from that. I am surely not darkening the picture when I say that Harding's denial was absolute: it seemed to me that he would not even let the idea of forgiving England's debt enter into his mind; so at length, having no new argument to urge, I rose.

"I would not have bothered you, Senator," I began, "but the lady who introduced me insisted that you were an earnest Christian, and I have always hope of a real Christian: he may rise to any height; anyone who loves the spirit of Jesus is always, I think, open to impulses of love and sacrifice; but I was told this morning in Marion

that you were not a Christian, but a Seventh Day Adventist; if I had known that, I'd never have appealed to you."

He had risen when I rose, and now interrupted me by saying hurriedly: "I'm not a Seventh Day Adventist; my folks are, but I'm a Baptist."

It would be useless to paint this lily. I smiled, and opened the door: the outer room was filled with people—suitors, suppliants, worshippers of the rising sun! My disappointment was so complete that it suggested one last word:

"Oh, Senator," I began, "in the ante-chamber there, there is a splendid photograph of you between a photo of Lincoln and another of Washington—what an original idea!" (All the suitors smiled in approval; he smiled too, largely.) "Perfectly original," I repeated; "it would hardly occur to anyone else in the world!" and I went away, seeing all the smiles disappear.

It was rude, I'm afraid, but I hope it'll be forgiven me. If Warren Harding had had any clear idea of the range of thought of Washington, or any glimmering of that lofty sweet soul of Lincoln, he would never have challenged such a disastrous comparison. He would, perhaps, have flanked his photograph with the effigies of Andy Johnson or of General Grant or Roosevelt, and even then he would have been flattering himself unduly.

## XXI

### JIM LARKIN, THE IRISH LABOUR LEADER

IT is difficult to meet Larkin, even casually, without becoming interested in him. He is very tall, well over six feet, loose built, with the figure of a youth. His hair is greying, and there are lines about the eyes and mouth that tell of middle-age. The large grey eyes, however, are still laughing and boyish, and the mobile lips humorous, persuasive; the features are all well-cut, Greek rather than Celtic; a very quiet, unassuming, rather handsome fellow, with sympathetic, conciliatory manners.

Before meeting him, I knew he had had only two or three years' schooling, and naturally I expected a strong brogue and a gift of the gab setting grammar at defiance. To my astonishment, there was hardly a trace of accent in his speech; and in a couple of hours' talk not a mistake of any kind did he make, not a solecism even—he spoke admirable, quiet English, the English of a well-read man with a gift of fluent expression.

His choice of words reminded me of Galsworthy, his facility of Bernard Shaw.

And the marvel was that what he said was as good as his easy way of saying it. He understood labour conditions in Ireland and England and these United States better than anyone with whom I have ever talked—a singularly wise, fair, fine mind, the equal of the best politicians I have met in Washington or in France or

even in England, where the politician is sometimes almost a statesman.

Since then I have had Larkin at lunch, have met him in excited political meetings and over tea-tables, have argued with him, and disputed with him, and I believe have come to know him thoroughly; I say, deliberately, there is no company of the most distinguished in the world where Jim Larkin would not hold his own and have his place.

One instance of his fair-mindedness. I was speaking to him once of de Valera—and speaking, I'm afraid, with a certain derision. I told Larkin how I had written to de Valera without getting any reply, therefore called him up once on the 'phone, saying I should be glad to see him, and asking for an appointment. I was told to call his secretary next day, and I'd get a reply to my request. I did as I was told, and was informed by the secretary that Mr. de Valera would give me five minutes if I called precisely at four o'clock on the following Wednesday. I told the secretary that if de Valera's time was so valuable, I would certainly not trespass on it, even for a second. Three years before, in 1916, I had addressed myself in the same way to the late Theodore Roosevelt, and his secretary offered me ten minutes; I didn't avail myself of his munificence; but, after all, Roosevelt was busy and was Roosevelt; whereas de Valera, judged by his speeches, is a mere nonentity.

"You're too severe," said Larkin; "you can't expect every Irish President to be a great man; and you ought not to judge him by his secretary."

"But has he anything in him?" I asked; "ought I to know him? Is there anything to be gained by knowing him?"



"Nothing for you, perhaps," said courteous Jim, laughing; "but he might gain something, and, after all, he represents us; I really think he tries to do his best; he's well-meaning, I believe, and that's something to be thankful for in a politician."

Larkin made me study de Valera's acts and words more closely than I should otherwise have done, and it is not his fault if my opinion of the man has not thereby been improved. Had de Valera any sense of real duty, he would have been present at the trial of his famous countryman, and lent him all the aid of his presence and influence, such as they are. De Valera might have made a Court of the court-room, and struck a great blow quietly for justice and right; instead of that, he was away in Oklahoma, probably studying oil-wells.

Larkin was arrested in New York under the infamous Espionage Act, which long ago should have fallen into desuetude; he was charged, with some others, with having published something or other seditious. It is a matter of no moment that scant proof was forthcoming of his connection with the publication; his companions have, I believe, been punished; at long last he came before Judge Weeks for trial.

Now all of us men, any of us, should be excused for missing the extraordinary at a first meeting. No doubt, Judge Weeks came into court expecting to meet an ordinary Irish or Irish-American labour leader, a half-educated rebel burning with a sense of class injustice. But, after hearing Larkin speak for ten minutes, any English judge, or even a French judge, would have begun to amend his estimate, and after the first day would have instinctively tried to treat Larkin as Larkin deserves to be treated; for we are all, by nature, respectors of great

persons when there is any corresponding greatness in ourselves.

But Weeks's manner never altered; he was peremptory rude to Larkin at the beginning, and he was disgracefully rude, insolent, and overbearing to him at the end.

His prejudice was unmistakable; he allowed the Assistant District Attorney Rorke to make accusations of "alien enemy" and so forth, which Larkin took exception to. Later the judge had to tell the jury to ignore these disgraceful, slanderous falsehoods; but at the time he let them pass without question. On the other hand, he interrupted Larkin continually, now on a question of law, now on a doubtful irrelevance, time and again without reason; as if he were resolved to give him no chance of putting his case fairly to the jury.

Never in any civilised country have I witnessed such appalling partisanship; I don't believe "hanging Judge Jeffries" in England was ever so unfair. And it costs me, as an American, a great deal to write this sentence.

One example, however, will prove my contention. At one point Larkin expostulated at an interruption: "You prevent me," he said, "from putting the facts before the jury."

"That's contempt of court," cried the judge.

"You can punish me for it," retorted Larkin, quietly.

"Punishing you," barked Judge Weeks, with contempt in words and manner, "would be like carrying coals to Newcastle!"

Yet Larkin is supposed to be innocent till proven guilty.

Nothing like this have I ever heard or read of in any court before.

I want to tell my fellow-Americans that it doesn't amuse me to write like this, to prove over again that our

courts are inferior to the worst courts of Europe, that our mentality is inferior, our sense of justice and fair-play lower, more blunted!

Time was when I was laughed at and ridiculed in England for asserting that America (in spite of shameful lynchings) was a little more humane, a little more disposed to look on the faults and follies of men tolerantly than any other country; but now, after the trial of Miss Goldman by Judge Julius Mayer and of little Mollie Steiner by Judge Clayton and Judge Knox, and after this farce of judging Jim Larkin by Judge Weeks, I am forced to admit that American justice is the lowest known in Christendom, and our judges worse than any I have met in the dark and tyrannical past in Junker-ruled Berlin or Tsarist Moscow.

And alas! alas! alas! that's not the worst of it. The judge in Moscow or in Berlin who judged unrighteous judgment, and gave infamous and disproportionate sentences, might hope for immediate reward. If he sentenced a twenty-year-old girl for a speech or a writing to fifteen years' or fifteen months' imprisonment, he might hope for immediate advancement and higher pay, or at least a gracious word of commendation from the All-Highest!

But our American judge gives these inhuman, brutal, devilish sentences without hope of reward—out of sheer brainless, malevolent stupidity.

Judges Mayer, Clayton, Knox, and Weeks make me despair of humanity. Has any one of them a daughter of twenty? Does he know what it would mean to keep her in prison for fifteen years? No criminal I have ever read of is so wicked as such a judge! And he is an American judge, and acts without temptation of reward

or honour; I am ashamed to the soul by having to expose such savagery!

#### BERNARD SHAW AS JUDGE

Bernard Shaw was right when he wrote to me the other day: "Haven't the lynchings taught you yet that you are mistaken in America? I send you herewith the copy of a speech of mine, delivered before 3000 people in London during the war, who applauded me. I defy you now to reproduce it in your so-called free America! America doesn't know what free speech and fair-play mean!"

Shaw was right. I was wrong, dreadfully mistaken. Judges Mayer, Clayton, Knox, and Weeks prove Shaw to be right. They defile before me into the oven-fire of the lowest Circle, and are greeted by the unspeakable Postmaster Burleson and by Attorney-General Palmer, for whom no one can find a fitting adjective!

"How long, oh Lord, how long  
Shall Thy handmaid linger?  
She who shall right the wrong  
And make the oppressed strong,  
Sweet morrow, bring her!  
Hasten her over the sea  
Bring her to men and to me.  
O Slave pray still on the knee  
Freedom's ahead!"

Now, to finish the story of this tragic-farce, which was redeemed—as far as such obscene exhibitions of human stupidity can ever be redeemed—by Larkin's noble attitude and noble words.

Judge Weeks charged the jury that "there is but one

lawful means of overturning this Government. That is by the means provided by the Constitution, through the ballot."

But suppose the ballot is ignored, Judge Weeks, and lawfully elected members of the New York legislative body are refused the right to sit and vote. What then?

But Weeks wasn't troubled by logic; he went on to say that if Larkin had tried to change the Government by strikes, then Larkin should be adjudged guilty. Striking is illegal, according to Weeks, who thereby would establish chattel slavery in free America!

#### LARKIN'S DEFENCE

It is the bare truth to say that Larkin's defence lifted the whole case to a higher level; he began by telling simply how he had been arrested, and searched without a warrant, and how various papers important to his defence had then been stolen from him by the police officers.

Any English judge at this point would have stopped the case and insisted that the police officers should give back the stolen papers.

But Judge Weeks was content to interpolate the statement that police officers were justified in arresting any man whom they believed guilty of a felony; justified too, apparently, in stealing from him. The fourth amendment of the Constitution is evidently as worthless as the first or the seventh. Larkin went on to say that "he had preached humanity, a real law and a real order; he had preached brotherhood, as against national, brute, and herd hatred.

"For this he was charged with anarchy," he said, "and was placed in the category of assassins.

"This trial is a class issue," he continued. "My life," he declared, "has been lived in accordance with, and for, Socialism, which many of us regard as being a religion."

He had "tried to assist in developing, enriching, and beautifying life."

"Why are you so fearful of Socialism?" he asked the jury. "The best minds in the world have accepted it." He quoted Anatole France, George Bernard Shaw, and leading thinkers in America. But in America, he stated, the capitalist forces are "going to put a steel cap on the human mind, and they are going to screw it down and prevent one from thinking."

Throughout his life, Larkin explained, he had opposed war, had been associated with organisations working for peace, and had always resisted the forces of violence.

And then, quite naturally, he reached the height of pathos; he told the jury how he had tried to leave this country eleven times; "his family in Dublin needed him," he said, "and his eldest son, his favourite son, was lying at Death's door; but the British Government had taken measures to prevent him from returning to Ireland."

Then he went on to quote Lincoln: "a world-force and not a District Attorney of the State of New York." He quoted, too, from Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom" in support of his statement that the U. S. Government is "the combined manufacturers and capitalists of the country."

Then, prevented by Weeks from quoting anything more, he added:

"THE POOR WILL UNDERSTAND"

"The poor and the unfortunate in my country will understand. It is they who believe in me in Ireland; it



is they who understand. My wife and children will perhaps get along. And in this country there are some among my own countrymen who will work to see that justice is done."

I feel that, after this, I ought not to speak of Assistant District Attorney Rorke, but something of the grotesque would be lacking if I left him out. He spoke with excited rhetoric of Larkin as "a liar," "an alien enemy," "an archangel of assassinations," who with "lily-white fingers" would starve all the babies of the United States to death. Nothing to be said about all his witless rhodomontade, but what Dante said: *Non ragionam di lor ma guarda e passa* (Don't let us speak of them, but look and pass them by).

#### THE SENTENCE

It is the seventh amendment of the Constitution, I believe, that warns judges against exacting excessive bail or giving excessive sentences: an admonition more honoured, surely, in the observance than in the breach; and yet all American judges in the last two years have run about seeking how they could outdo their neighbour in imposing extravagant bail and insane sentences. They have thus made the whole administration of justice in America a laughing-stock and a shame throughout Europe.

An English judge wrote to me wittily the other day:

"My dear Harris,

"From all I can learn, twenty years' life in America is not so valuable or inspiring as two in Great Britain.

Why, then, shouldn't the American judge recognise this difference in values?"

A post card from a Scotch friend is before me as I write; one sentence reads:

"Thank God I am in Europe again and among civilised and humane people. One glimpse of Westminster and the Royal Courts of Justice is worth all the paper constitutions in the world."

Is this the reputation America desires to get in the world? Jim Larkin's trial and inhuman sentence will not be washed out or forgotten in a thousand years—a thousand years of contempt for Weeks, Clayton, Knox, Mayer, Rorke, & Co.

## XXII

### OLIVE SCHREINER

#### AD MEMORIAN

**I** FIRST met Olive Schreiner in the office of the publishers, Chapman & Hall—in 1883, I think.

A few months before, Frederic Chapman, the head of the house, had talked to me about a book that had been offered them for publication, "The Story of an African Farm." He said he had sent it to Meredith, who was then the reader for the house, and Meredith had praised it enthusiastically, while advising the author to make some corrections.

Naturally I exclaimed that I would like to see any book that Meredith had praised, particularly a book about South Africa, which I happened to know pretty well, for I had stopped at Cape Town on my first journey round the world and had been infinitely interested in both Boer and Briton in that magical half-explored continent.

A morning or two later I went across the corridor from the *Fortnightly* office to the office of Frederic Chapman, and noticed two or three books on the side of his desk. He picked one up and said:

"Oh, here's 'The Story of an African Farm,' that you wanted; and, if you would care to see the author, she is coming to-day between eleven and twelve. She's rather a pretty little Jewess. You might like to know her."

I said I would be on hand, and turned back into the

*Fortnightly Review* office and sat down to look at the book. In five minutes I was interested, fascinated, absorbed.

The faults of the book stared at me, but the magic of it was in my blood. Here was all the witchery of the high veldt and the strange barbaric land with its mountains and kloofs, great forests and strange wild animals, and, above all, the entrancing climate of the high, African plateau, where one has the blazing tropic sunshine and the champagne-like, dry, intoxicating air. Here, too, were fairy sunsets and magic sunrisings, and here were real people—modern in this most romantic of all settings. The book came into me in long draughts.

Suddenly—it seemed as if only ten minutes had passed—Chapman called me saying: “Won’t you come across? Miss Olive Schreiner is here, and would like to meet you.”

I went across and was introduced. Chapman, eager to get to his own business, soon packed us both off into the *Fortnightly* room. We sat down and talked for an hour or so.

Olive Schreiner was at that time a girl of about nineteen; distinctly pretty; large dark eyes, black hair, and little square strong figure—the figure betraying the Jew in her more strongly than her face; yet the race characteristics were marked, too, in the slightly beaked nose and southern dark complexion.

She told me she was the daughter of a missionary, and was born in Basutoland. Her chief desires she made plain to me at once. She wanted to know all the writers, especially the novelists: would I introduce her to Thomas Hardy and George Moore? I told her I could easily arrange a meeting with Moore, but that Hardy was more

difficult. He came to London only on visits. It would need time to get him.

The other desire in her was to put forward the feminist view. She was a suffragette before the name became known, and later embodied her passionate views on the matter in a little booklet, "Women and Labour," which had a certain influence in favour of woman suffrage, both in England and America.

She was very much interested so long as I praised "The Story of an African Farm," and I praised it enthusiastically; but, as soon as I began criticising it as a story, she seemed to lose interest in what I said. Her manner became detached, so to speak, and she either would not or could not follow me. I gave up the attempt, rather amused by her self-centred complacency.

A few days later I had George Moore in the office to meet her. He did not know South Africa as I knew it, and so had not been struck by the magical representment in the book of the atmosphere of the high veldt and all the local colour implicit in such a landscape. He thought the book a poor one.

While we were still talking about it, Miss Schreiner came in. She did not seem to make much impression on Moore, but Moore evidently made an astonishing impression on her. I stood in frank surprise and watched the pair. Was it Moore's light golden hair and pale complexion or his prominent blue eyes that won her? I cannot say, but it was plain that she admired him. She looked at him with all her soul in her eyes. He held forth upon the supreme value of the naturalistic novel, with phrases borrowed chiefly from Zola, that I had heard a hundred times already and did not believe in; but which she listened to entranced, with parted lips. I

stood by and grinned to myself, wondering what the upshot would be.

Curiously enough, her admiration for Moore brought my interest in her to an untimely end. No one could be really important to me who admired Moore so intensely. I had already found out that she knew little or nothing of any social question, was interested almost exclusively in writing and in improving the status of women. She soon became an even more enthusiastic admirer of Edward Carpenter than she had been of George Moore and I found this devotion more comprehensible though I do not believe in Carpenter's genius.

Afterwards she used me as an editor and sent me some of her "Dreams"—slight, obvious allegories—some of which I published, but without admiring them; published as a journalist would, because of the extraordinary success of "The African Farm," which caused a real sensation in London. More than once she told me that she had written half a dozen novels better than "The African Farm," but no one ever saw any of them so far as I could learn, and as time went on I took leave to doubt the story.

I remember Sir Charles Dilke telling me that he looked upon "The African Farm" as the ablest book ever written by a woman. Remembering Emily Brontë and the poems of Christine Rossetti and Barrett Browning, I could only shrug my shoulders and smile at his enthusiasm; but later I met Miss Schreiner at Dilke's, and found that he was still a fervent admirer. She herself had won to poise now, and a mature self-satisfaction; and when she spoke, it was with a little air of authority and finality which sat prettily upon her pretty face, and amused me hugely. I felt sure that we had got all the best of her in



her first book. In a year or two she drifted out of London, and we heard of her marriage in 1894 with a certain indifference.

But before the South African War came she spoke again in "Trooper Peter Halket," a really passionate arraignment of Cecil Rhodes's policy; and later still she told of the war in a book entitled "An English South African's View."

She was very honest, very sincere; her soul, flame-like, burning to a high, thin point in admiration of truth and beauty and what she knew was right; she stood always in favour of the Boers, whom she understood, and against the English, whom she admired.

And after years came the news of her death. Well, her work was all done, and it was good work, noble work from beginning to end. May the South African earth she loved rest lightly upon her. *Ave atque vale.*

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## XXIII

### SARAH BERNHARDT

SARAH, *la divine*, as the French called her, is dead, and the authorities have given her a gorgeous funeral; to tell the truth, the finest funeral I've ever seen, even in Paris, except perhaps the funeral given to Victor Hugo some forty years ago.

But even at Hugo's funeral there were not such masses of flowers as at Sarah's: two huge van-loads, besides wreaths uncountable.

The poet had made an immense reputation: judge him how you will, condemn his rhetoric here and his theatrical effects everywhere, and there yet remains a residuum of astonishing poetry. He was a singer like Swinburne; and just as Swinburne brought new cadences, unknown harmonies, into our English verse, so did Hugo into French verse: a verbal magician of the first rank. But what had Sarah Bernhardt done to be honoured in like fashion? Nothing, it seems to me; nothing whatever of enduring value. Very early Matthew Arnold said of her that Rachel began where Sarah Bernhardt left off; and, if one can explain this by noting that Arnold saw Rachel as a young man and Sarah in his maturity, still he suggests a doubt of Sarah's power, which I feel was "ustified. I thought more could be made even of "Phèdre" than she made of it, and she never gave me the unearthly thrill that Duse gave in "La Femme de Claude."

Now that Sarah is dead, I can only think of her in a personal way; for it is as a personality, rather than as an actress, that she always impressed me most. To write of her at all makes me feel as if I were fallen into anecdotage. It is so long since I first saw her play "Doña Sol" in Victor Hugo's "Hernani" in the Comédie Française in Paris—further off than far away.

It must have been in the year '77 or '78, when I was in the early twenties, and Sarah already in the thirties. She won a prize at the Conservatoire of Paris in '62, and entered the Comédie Française shortly afterwards. I cannot help thinking that, when she said she was born in '45, she must have forgotten to count some Sundays.

When I saw her first she was at her best as a woman, though perhaps not as an actress—the Jewish type with grey eyes and lissome figure, a *fausse maigre*, as the French call those who look thin, but are really of rounded outline. She was wonderful as "Andromaque," but her "Phèdre" was better, sixteen years later, when she had reached the full maturity of her talent; to me, it was always talent she possessed, and not genius. She had a beautiful voice, and, as long as she kept to the middle register, it really deserved to be called a voice of gold, so lovely were the mellow contralto tones in it. Who that ever heard her in "Doña Sol" can forget how she declared her love: "Je vous aime, je vous aime encore, et je vous aime toujours"? But, when she went on to the greater phrases in which Victor Hugo sought to realise passion, I thought her declamation hardly more than admirable recitation. She did not realise the feeling in its intensity, though the house rose to her in wildest enthusiasm and cheered and cheered again. She gave no indication of how life left her as her lover's steps died

away, and there was no gasp of renewed life when she felt her soul revive with his returning:

“Quand le bruit de vos pas s’efface  
Je crois que mon cœur ne bat plus  
Mais dès qu’enfin ce pas que j’attends et que j’aime  
Vient frapper mes oreilles, alors il me souvient que je vis  
Et je sens mon âme qui revient.”

Mounet Sully played “Hernani,” and he was certainly a most splendid stage lover, with quite as great a power as she had of beautiful recitation. His voice, too, was most melodious.

When I came to myself, after seeing them both a dozen times, I felt that all Victor Hugo had written was really good rhetoric, and all Sarah Bernhardt and Mounet Sully had given was superb declamation.

Once in the old Burg Theatre in Vienna I heard a young actress—I forget even her name—but she was greater than Sarah Bernhardt, just as Adelaide Neilson in “Juliet” made a deeper impression on me than Sarah did, to say nothing of the incomparable Duse, who surely was head and shoulders above her. I honestly think Mimi Aguglia as great an actress as Sarah Bernhardt; but then I am not taken by mere beauty of voice or reciting. I look, if I can, for the moment in which the soul is bared with intensity of realisation.

I was introduced to Sarah Bernhardt in the foyer of the Théâtre Français by Marguerite Durand, but Sarah paid scant attention to me at that time, taking me, evidently for an admirer of Mlle. Durand, and not considering me in any sense a foeman worthy of her steel. I admired her as much as she deserved to be admired, I thought. I remember visiting her at her home, and see-

ing one or two of her sculptures; but her sculptures, like her painting, only confirmed my impression that she had no understanding of genius or the diabolical discipline it imposes.

I knew her husband, Jacques Damala, better than I knew Sarah. He was a very good-looking man, five feet eight or nine in height, and well-built, with long, dark brown eyes, regular features, and olive complexion. If I remember rightly, the family had gone from Marseilles to Athens; at any rate, it was in Athens and at the Hotel d'Athènes that I got to know them—the handsome mother and a lovely daughter; Jacques had just left the Corps des Pages. They all spoke French as if it had been their mother tongue—as well, of course, as modern Greek.

I was in Paris for a year, a little later, and met Damala again and again. He dined with me three or four times, and once I remember his taking me to some Cercle in Paris where baccarat was being played for pretty high stakes, and where he lost four or five thousand francs without turning a hair. “La guigne,” he remarked, carelessly, “me poursuit.” But the proverb held good with him: “Unlucky in play, lucky in love,” for later I heard in London that he was on the best of terms with Sarah Bernhardt. When I next visited Paris I joked him about it, but he met my poor attempt at raillery with portentous earnestness, declaring that he admired Mlle. Sarah enormously, and that he was thinking of becoming an actor.

A few weeks later the world was startled with the news that the pair had crossed to London and been married. A year or so later I saw them acting together, and was astounded at the mastery of the art shown by

Jacques Damala. I have forgotten all about the play, but he had to say "I love you" to Sarah in it, and I thought he said "I love you" better than I had ever heard it said on any stage. He was really a remarkable *cabotin*, fitted to play almost any part in life with assured mastery, or rather, masterly assurance.

With all gravity he told me that they were ideally happy, and the halcyon weather lasted almost exactly as long as his wife's savings—which ran into millions of francs, I believe.

The next winter they went on a *tournée*, and when in eastern Europe somewhere—I think at Trieste—the end came. Sarah, it appears, even before this had reason to doubt M. Damala's fidelity. At Trieste she found out that he was deceiving her with one of the younger actresses of her own company. She was furious, and told him what she thought of him on the stage at a rehearsal, before everyone. One of the company declared that it was a great scene. Damala listened to her calling him names in perfect silence, with all the appearance of patient courtesy. When she had screamed herself hoarse, he bowed to her and assured her that she would never be troubled by him again. He went out of the theatre, ordered his valet to pack his boxes, and took the first train back to Paris.

A really great gambler, who knew when to leave—the table.

He was a curious nature, Jacques Damala; though very simple when you came to know him. He had got the ideal of "the perfect gentleman" into his head, and really tried to live up to it. A debt of honour was to him sacred, yet he would give you a "stumer cheque" for your good *billets de Banque*, as if he were conferring a



favour. He had excellent manners, dressed in quiet style, and made his ideal the companion of his acts and thoughts. He resented Sarah's slanging him in public passionately. As soon as I heard of it I knew he would not forgive her easily.

When I saw Damala in Paris, many months later, he did not talk much about his matrimonial adventure. He regretted suavely that a bad temper and the tongue of a fishwife usually went with great talent in an actress, but he had no wish to enter into details. He regarded the incident as closed. "One should never marry a celebrity," was his final man-of-the-world's comment on the affair.

Sarah, I learned, had taken the matter desperately to heart. For a day or two after Damala's departure she went on acting as if nothing had happened; but within a week she cancelled all further engagements in Moscow and Petersburg, paid all the penalties, and returned hot-foot to Paris, to meet Damala and bring about a reconciliation; but he would not see her.

One day in the Avenue de l'Opera I almost ran into her as she got out of her brougham. To my astonishment, she caught me by the arm. "The very man I wanted to see," she cried; "give me Jacques's address. Take me to him!"

"I regret I cannot," I replied.

"How do you mean?" she exclaimed; "you must know where he lives and how to find him."

"Yes," I replied, "but I've promised him not to give his address to anyone."

"You won't deny it to me," she cried; "you wouldn't if you knew how I have suffered. Oh, I want to meet him again; I must win his forgiveness! Oh, can't you

realise how terrible it is to have thrown away what you most desire in the world? As soon as he left me, I realised how foolish I had been, how mad. What did it matter to me whom else he kissed, so long as I had him? What fools jealousy makes of us all, what insane fools! I beg you to give me his address; even if you won't speak for me, tell me where I can see him. I love him!"

She found even deeper words, but first she made me get into the brougham and go home with her. There she pleaded as I've never heard a woman plead—or a man either, for that matter.

"Miserable creatures, we women are," she flung out; "we love more and more, give ourselves more and more completely, whereas the man loves most at first. What an irony of the gods to make us, the weaker, suffer the more intensely. The tragedy of life, it is all in that; the bitterness and the shame."

I never heard her plead on the stage with a tenth part of the persuasiveness lent her by passionate feeling. I simply could not refuse her. Who was I to judge between them? I said: "Madame, I won't give you the address, but I am going there now. If you choose, come with me. I will write him a little note asking him to dine, and leave it for him if he's not at home."

I wrote the note; we went downstairs, got into a sápin, and went to Damala's apartment. I begged her to wait till I came out, to wait at least a short quarter of an hour if he were in and I didn't return immediately. I meant to give him the note asking him to dine with me, say a word or two, and come away; but he insisted on coming to the door with me, and, as I opened it, there was Sarah. She had not waited, as she had promised. She held out her hands to him imploringly and passed into the room,

and I shut the door; but I had seen him draw back, and heard the contemptuous word—*cabotine*.

Much later, Marcel Schwob, the excellent French writer, asked me to help him with some translations out of English, especially "Hamlet." One night he insisted on taking me round to Madame Bernhardt's theatre, and, as my luck would have it, the manager came into our box in the second act and told us that he had the worst of news—M. Damala was dead.

I had not even known he was ill.

"What are we to do?" cried the manager.

"Don't tell it to Madame Damala till after the play," advised Schwob. And when the curtain fell, he asked me to go round with him to Sarah's dressing-room, so that the news might be broken to her as carefully as possible.

Sarah was in her dressing-room, with her hat on, but only half dressed: in fact, she was in her corset, and a little bit of linen stuck out of her drawers behind, giving her the air of a hen. She said: "I hope you don't mind seeing me like this; I'll be ready in a moment," and went on putting some carmine on her lips, when the knock of the stage manager came to the door.

"Qui est-ce?" she asked imperiously; and then: "entrez."

The stage manager came in.

"Vous!" she cried in astonishment; then "que voulez-vous?"

"Madame," he said, "j'ai de bien tristes nouvelles à vous donner!" (I have sad news for you!)

"Ah, what?" she said, looking at him.

"M. Damala est au plus mal." (M. Damala is very ill.)

Sarah turned and went on reddening her lips, and then :  
"Vous voulez dire qu'il est mort." (You mean he's dead?)

"Oui, Madame."

She turned again to the glass to finish her lips, and then suddenly "Tant mieux!" (so much the better), she tossed out, disdainfully.

A moment later she repeated it impatiently as a dismissal. "Tant mieux, tant mieux!" bidding the manager go. I thought Damala deserved a better requiem; but then I was judging him by his exquisite sister.

## XXIV

### LORD CURZON AND "THE SOULS"

**I**F ever anyone was born with a golden spoon in his mouth it was assuredly George Curzon. He seemed to be equipped with all possible advantages; he was of good family, and well-off; strong too and good looking, endowed besides with an excellent verbal memory, rare power of work and leaping ambition. What might he not accomplish and become?

At Eton even he was noted and marked for distinction; a good scholar and the best boy-orator in the great school, he already spoke of himself as a future Prime Minister and self-estimate seemed to his fellows reasonable and likely.

At Oxford his reputation grew; he was President of the Union in 1880; he won the Lothian Essay Prize and the Prize for the Arnold Essay and if he had to be contented with Second Honours in the Final Examination, people who did not know how hard he worked to be in the First Class thought his achievements prodigious for the son of a Baron.

In 1885, when only twenty-six years old he entered Parliament and was at once made Private Secretary to Lord Salisbury, the Tory Leader.

About this time in London we were continually hearing of three young Conservatives who were proclaimed as geniuses: Curzon, Harry Cust, the heir to Earl Brownlowe, and handsome George Wyndham.

I think it was in 1884, that I first met Curzon at a dinner. He was certainly an imposing figure; at least six feet two in height and broad in proportion; but his face surprised one with a sense of disparity; it was chubby, round, hairless, fresh-coloured, altogether too small for the gigantic body and ridiculously young-looking. His manners were excellent; cordial, quick, ingenuous; but his self-esteem was manifestly unbounded. At table he took the floor, giving his opinion on every subject that came up and expressing himself rhetorically with the self-possession of the practised speaker. The performance was schoolboyish and so to be pardoned even in a future Prime Minister. One could not help recalling the doggerel verse with which Oxford had revenged itself on his presumption:

My name is George Nathaniel Curzon  
I am a most superior person.  
I was brought up at Balliol College  
And what I don't know, is not knowledge.

His chiefs in the House of Commons took Curzon at his own valuation. From the outset he was treated as a Cabinet Minister and a "House was made" for him. The phrase needs explanation. It is generally believed that everyone in the House of Commons has an equal chance of "catching the Speaker's eye," and of being called on to speak. That is not the case. The Whips of both parties meet before a debate and exchange lists of the Ministers who wish to speak; they give each other the order and settle approximately the time each Minister will address the House. These lists are handed to the Speaker who follows them scrupulously except in the case of a maiden speech which always takes precedence.



Now from the beginning Curzon was put on the Whips' list and Conservative members were requested to keep their places till he had spoken. Consequently, he had always a large audience and knew that when he got up he would be allowed to address it at once. It is hardly possible to overrate the value of such a privilege. In 1891 Curzon was made Under-Secretary for India. He treated the House with a tolerant and patient contempt, much as a tutor would use towards an idiot child and in revenge the abler Members already spoke of him as hard working rather than brilliant, and fluent rather than witty.

To his honour be it said that he took life and its opportunities seriously; he was not content with book learning; in every vacation he travelled extensively, now through Central Asia and again through Indo-China; he has been over the Pamirs across "the Roof of the World" and down the Yang-tse River.

### THE SOULS

But I am forgetting George Curzon's main claim to posthumous fame. If not the founder of "The Souls" in London, he was at least the organizer of that aristocratic and select society.

How "The Souls" came into being it is rather difficult to say but it can hardly be denied that Arthur Balfour was the inspiring influence.

Arthur Balfour is at heart a Scotch metaphysician; even before Bergson, he had seen that human reason was a poor criterion of truth and had come to understand that there are intuitions, messages of the soul's antennæ so to speak, which are more trustworthy though impos-

sible of verification. When ordinary men scoffed at prejudices he defended "prejudice" agreeing with old Dr. Johnson that "one prejudice, Sir, is worth a score of reasons."

To the finer feminine consciousness Arthur Balfour was a very interesting person; he was over six feet in height, with a slight elegant figure, and handsome student face; his manners too were distinguished—the manners of the Court, touched to gentlest issues by a silken voice and deprecatory approach.

Some superfine ladies felt that their innate modesties and delicacies had at length found in him an ideal defender. He had been called "Angelina" at Eton and yet one felt the iron hand through the velvet glove.

He was simply "adorable" for a hundred reasons and manifestly on the way to becoming Prime Minister. Accordingly his intimates formed a coterie in London society which was soon christened "The Souls" in opposition to the Prince of Wales's set, which was usually called "The Smart Set" but sometimes found a coarser cognomen.

"The Souls" were nearly all distinguished intellectually. They had read and thought; lived indeed in emotions and meditations, whereas "The Smart Set" were supposed only to have felt and to be conversant solely with sensations—"like the lower classes, my dear."

"The Souls" put no stress on the distinctions of birth or wealth, but nevertheless were recruited by high privilege of nature from the choicest flowers of the English aristocracy. Lord and Lady Ribblesdale, Lady Brownlowe and Lady Elcho; Miss Margot Tennant and Mrs. Grenfell; George Curzon, too and George Wyndham, the Duke of Westminster and others.

At the height of the season of 1889, George Curzon gave them all a famous dinner when, it was said, he recited a wonderful poem and was answered also in most exquisite verse by Arthur Balfour, if you please.

On the Ninth of July, 1890, Curzon gave "The Souls" another banquet which he prefaced with a poem of the most extraordinary cleverness, welcoming all his guests by name or nickname: "So sweet of him, dear, and so clever!"

I reproduce half a dozen of the best verses in this portentously long outpouring which kept the guests at the hors d'oeuvres for more than half an hour. But then many ladies prefer the Zakoushki to the meal.

#### "THE SOULS" BANQUET

A second time these friends are met,  
Again the festal board is set,  
The envy of a world to whet,  
Again 'tis George N. Curzon,  
The author of the original crime,  
The minstrel of a former time,  
Who mounts his Pegasus of rhyme  
And claps his rusty spurs on!

From two illustrious parent stocks,  
Whose either chieftain proudly mocks  
Time and its pert and vulgar shocks—  
A Tennant and a Charteris—  
Are sprung the flowers of my lay,  
Though hazardous it were to say  
Which of the Pair, the Bart so gay  
Or Wemyss' Earl the smarter is!

Straight from the canvas of Vandyck  
 A stately pair \* steps forth, alike  
 By Nature well equipped to strike  
 With love and admiration. . . .

Godfrey, whose tongue is barbed with wit,  
 Doll, whose satiric vein can fit  
 The world and yet hurt none in it,  
 To these I tune a triolet;  
 And never be my lyre unstrung  
 While Granby's Marquis can be sung,  
 Or, loveliest all the loves among,  
 The gifted Lady Violet!

Arthur † still fills King Arthur's chair  
 At our Round Table, who, howe'er  
 Beset by pagan ambush, bare  
 Has most Hibernian shams laid. . . .

Engaged alas! is Eaton's Duke,‡  
 Whose life is a superb rebuke  
 To those who argue 'tis a fluke  
 If noblemen are noble. . . .

Cust, Curzon, Wyndham need not try  
 To-night to catch the Speaker's eye  
 Since here in willing custody  
 Its apple is, Miss Julia.§  
 Hither has flown a little bird  
 Soft as the thistledown just stirred  
 By summer winds—if you've not heard  
 Of Molly,|| you're peculiar.

\* Lord and Lady Pembroke.

† Mr. Balfour.

‡ Westminster.

§ Miss Peel, the Speaker's daughter.

|| Mrs. Lucy.

. . . . .

Welcome then, lords and ladies all,  
 To the familiar banquet hall,  
 For Pommery, or for Margaux call,  
 The livelong evening go it!  
 And know that of you all most blest  
 And 'mid the happy happiest,  
 Because ye all are each his guest,  
 Is this your host and poet!

Naturally, considering Curzon's self-esteem the poem was printed and deftly circulated among those supposed to be worthy, able, that is, to appreciate its excellence. W. H. Mallock was shown a copy by Miss Margot Tennant a couple of months later and at once sent her a dozen verses in reply very much wittier and more amusing than Curzon's pompous platitudes of praise. But Mallock though obstinately celibate was not epicene and though a professed Tory had a touch of genius which disqualified him even as a neophyte among the nympholepts. Here are some of Mallock's verses.

### THE SOULS

You asked me, Miss Margot, one day last November,  
 If a certain production were due to my pen—  
 A Paper on "Souls" I replied you remember,  
 That I'd not even seen it. I've done so since then.

Well—you said it was good: and—ah me!—when you said it,  
 How I wished I could claim what had pleased you, as mine!  
 But now to my mind, I confess, since I've read it,  
 That the treatment seems poor for a subject so fine.

. . . . .

You keep talking of faith, of devotion, and purity,  
 Things deep and things high are your favourite themes;  
 We have dreamed of them too: but our song, in maturity,  
 Has sunk to one burden "Good-bye to our dreams."

Oh sons, and Oh daughters of art and of culture!  
 Forget for a moment your play and your parts;  
 And take pity upon us, for whom time is a vulture,  
 Which leaves us our livers and feeds on our hearts.

You might surely explain by what mental appliance,  
 You are able to fix the illusions of truth.  
 You might save us from memory, and save us from Science,  
 Which is leading us down to the death which is truth.

I say "us" you'll remark that in these my petitions,  
 I've invariably spoken of "us" and of "we":  
 But well—like all patriots and most politicians,  
 When I spoke about "us" I was thinking of "me."

Just a word in your ear. I am sure I should suit you all.  
 Suppose you admit me as one of your band.  
 I'll admire—the feeling of course must be mutual;  
 I'll discuss with you all things I least understand.

Such verbs as "admire" and "rise higher" and "aspire"  
 I will conjugate daily in all modes and tenses;  
 And I'll prove on the whole that I must be a soul,  
 For I'll show you I've quite taken leave of my senses.

"The Souls" gradually fell apart; spiritual affinities it  
 seems are not so strong as coarse physical hooks and  
 eyes, and soon they existed rather as a memory and faint



perfume like the musk in the mortar of San Sofia, then as a society. As a witty journalist said: "such bloodless erotics have no abiding but die before the kiss."

Nevertheless the society of "The Souls" had a certain influence for a season or two in London and "The Souls" supported George Curzon enthusiastically, finding rhetoric more to their taste than wit or artistry.

Through "The Souls" and the steadfast inexplicable friendship of Arthur Balfour, Curzon rose steadily till in 1895 he was made Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

It was felt that he had earned this promotion by the earnestness with which he had tried to fit himself for office by exploring every part of the empire. But already as at Oxford the intellectuals were all against him; "he has nothing new or personal to say," they declared; an "incurable mediocrity" was discovered in his books as in his speeches, for after his visit to Central Asia he wrote two large volumes embodying his experiences and after visiting Indo-China another pair of ponderous tomes.

This led to a scene in the House of Commons which broke the House up with laughter.

Tommy Bowles, had been the owner and editor of *Vanity Fair* and had gone into Parliament as a man of about fifty, but had immediately shown a genius, not only for debate, but for witty repartee and an astonishing knowledge of international affairs. His description of a Cabinet governed by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour had already taken a place in the annals of the House and become a legend. He drew attention to some extraordinary differences of opinion between the two leaders and confessed that the government of the

country puzzled him. He could only think of it as he thought of the great china factory at Sèvres, in which they made he believed two sorts of porcelain—*pâte dur* and *pâte tendre*—anglice, “hard and soft paste.” The House simply roared at the witty description.

One day Curzon got up and treated the House to a long lecture on the affairs in the Far East and after him little Tommy Bowles who certainly did not reach to his shoulders and who had a jaunty, careless, seaman air about him which got him the nickname of “Captain Bowles.” He confided to the House that he was much troubled because starting from the same place and knowing Curzon’s arguments he yet could not arrive at his conclusions.

He had only gone a little further when Curzon interrupted him pointing out that if he had done him the honour of reading page 680 in the second volume of his book he would have seen that the question was conclusively dealt with.

The moment the Minister got up Bowles resumed his seat with perfect politeness. As soon as Curzon sat down Bowles got up again and with a twinkle in his eye said:

“That is it, you see; that is my difficulty which I am sure you all share. He has been everywhere (jerking his thumb over his shoulder at Curzon); he has seen everything; he has read all the books—he has written most of ’em—”

The House simply dissolved in laughter and Bowles resumed his seat; his effect achieved.

Such incidents as this were the little stumbling blocks in George Curzon’s triumphal progress, the flies in the ointment of his anointing.

When the war between China and Japan broke out he committed himself to the prediction that Japan could not possibly hope for victory over China; that in fact Japan would be swallowed up as a swimmer in a great sea. Some journals, among them *The Saturday Review*, took this as a measure of his fatuity and predicted that Japan would whip China into submission in six months; and the journalist proved to be right.

Then began Curzon's descent. He married in this same year, 1895, a rich American girl, a Miss Leiter of Chicago, who was said to be a Jewess but was curiously undistinguished in mind as in appearance. "The Souls" could not survive the shock; had Arthur Balfour married a Laplander for her flat head and snub nose, the effect would hardly have been more disastrous. Suddenly people began to speak of Curzon as he was; a pompous politician and self-seeker, but hardly more.

There are always people in London as in Paris and Dublin (the true intellectual capitals of the world) who are able to distinguish between the pinchbeck of talent and the gold of genius—able even to classify the master workmen in every art.

Then came four years in which Curzon certainly did not improve his position in Parliament and in 1898, he got himself made an Irish baron and a year later went to India as Viceroy with the title of Earl. This simply meant that he had given up all hope of becoming Prime Minister, or indeed of rising beyond an Under-Secretaryship. But still a Viceroy of India with real brains might do a great deal. Curzon did his best, no doubt; but his best save in one "department" was utterly undistinguished.

It was Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the hus-

band of Queen Victoria, who introduced a new custom into the ritual of English Court ceremonial. German-like he was a stickler for forms (the more perhaps because the English would never allow him to be crowned as King), accordingly he insisted that at all public dinners he and the Queen and any other royalty should first go into the dining room and take their places and then be followed by their guests. Lord Curzon of Kedleston introduced this custom in Calcutta and in spite of the hardly disguised disdain of the great Indian officials he insisted on its observance.

In 1901 or '02, I think, two Miss Leiters, sisters of his wife went to India to visit the Viceroy and Vicereine. Being Americans they couldn't see why they shouldn't go into dinner at the same time as their sister. Curzon stood the breach of etiquette in silence as long as the dinners were purely family affairs, but on the occasion of a great public dinner he warned the two girls that they must enter with the other guests. The girls protested in vain and then put their heads together and determined on a new procedure. As soon as the doors of the dining room were thrown open discovering the semi-royal pair seated at the table the two girls entered and threw themselves on their knees touching their foreheads on the floor in true eastern style; they repeated the "salaam" three times before taking their seats to the wonder of some Indian dignitaries and the amusement of the more sensible of the English officials and the wrath of parading George.

Playing King pleased Curzon so intimately that he accepted a renewal of the office; but in 1905, his second term was brought to a painfully abrupt ending.

Kitchener had gone out to India as Commander-in-Chief and in his second year a disagreement between him and the Viceroy came to light. Curzon conducted the dispute with such silly arrogance that he put himself in a false position and had either to back down to his nominal inferior or step down and out. He preferred to resign the Viceroyalty and return to England where they made him Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, knowing that the title would please him. He really ought to have been a Lord High Chamberlain at some second-rate German Court.

Ever since his return to England he has marked the passage of the years with new volumes that nobody reads and very few are hardy enough even to review: "Lord Curzon in India, 1906"—an explanation of how he came to be beaten by Kitchener in a quarrel he himself provoked, "Principles of University Reform," "Modern Parliamentary Eloquence," and goodness knows what flatulence besides.

He has grown bald and corpulent; is as rhetorical and authoritative in speech as ever; but no one except Mr. Lloyd George now takes him seriously and Lloyd George uses Milner as the other crutch-arm on which to lean. Milner is full of surface knowledge of European things while Curzon has taken the gorgeous East for his special domain.

It is difficult for anyone to understand how Curzon could ever wield any influence or come back to the enjoyment of power in such a time of crisis as the present. But there is a condition at Oxford which I always think explains this and many similar anomalies. Magdalen is the "swellest" College in Oxford and in the constitu-

tion of the College it is expressly set forth that candidates for a fellowship with its comfortable little income and many privileges should be, "*bene natus, bene vestitus et mediocriter doctus*": Curzon is surely "well-born, well-dressed and not too learned."















